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J. J. Guideres



THE CHRISTIAN LAYMAN:

OR

THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

FULLY CONSIDERED,

ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE.

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By A CHRISTIAN LAYMAN.

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THE SECOND EDITION CORRECTED AND ABRIDGED,  
WITH AN APPENDIX.

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### ERRATA.

Page 5, in the quotation from Tim., insert the word *one*,  
between the words "and" and "Mediator."

Page 32, 13th line from the bottom, for the Greek article  
 $\alpha$ , read  $\alpha\varsigma$ .

Pages 56 and 58, the first line in the 58th page should  
be the last in the 56th.

The heading of the pages of the 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th  
and 15th Chapters, should be reversed.

Page 131, 6th line from bottom, for "never," read *ever*.

Page 177, 20th line from top, for "Coyrian," read Cy-  
prian.

Page 152, in the 10th line from the bottom, insert *not*  
between the words, *and with*.

Page 188, for Chapter XVII, read XVIII.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

Every writer has some object in view, when he undertakes any work ; and it is well to state that object at the commencement. I will here say, that it is not my intention to increase the unhappy divisions, and unkind feelings, which exist in the religious world ; nor to build up or aid any sect, doctrine, or creed, that is not fully supported by the Bible ; nor to condemn any, that is not clearly contrary to the testimony of God. If I know myself, I have no preference for any system, beyond what the truth as it is in Jesus requires. Although I have been educated in what is called the orthodox school and faith, yet I have no desire that it should be supported, if it is not fully substantiated by the gospel truth ; nor would I favor any other doctrine, that is not clearly maintained in the same way. It cannot be my object to endeavor to gain, personally, the applause of men, (I only hope to escape abuse and reproach,) for I do not intend that it shall be known even who I am ; being desirous that the work should stand or fall, according to its merits or demerits. For it is too often the case, that books are received or rejected, read or not read, approved or condemned, according to the prevailing feelings or impressions existing respecting the author. But I am anonymous, and, personally, have no influence. It is not my object to attempt to write in a style of great force, splendid eloquence, or fascinating beauty, if I was capable. Simplicity, plainness, truth, and clearness, are all I seek. Again, it is not my intention to be carried away with unfathomable mysteries, when I can find plain and brilliant truth to lead me. And it is not my design to make my faith explain and control the Bible, but let the Bible form and establish my faith.

I will now state affirmatively, and briefly, some of the objects I have in view. It is my design to bring forward and display *all* the testimony of God, which can have any relation, either directly or indirectly, to my subject; together with the various and different arguments and explanations used concerning the same. I shall not produce *one* part of Scripture, and omit another (as some have done) to favor any particular sect or doctrine; but shall endeavor to display the whole, that the *true doctrine* may be formed therefrom, and not a *human, imaginary system*, from a consideration of a part of the evidence only.

It is my most ardent desire to discourage and do away, as much as possible, all differences, divisions, controversies, and unkind feelings, that now unhappily prevail; to unite all professors as a band of brothers, so that, as Christ prayed, they all may be one, as he and the Father are one; and that it may be said of all, with admiration and praise—"see how these Christians love one another!" And I do seriously hope, that all the churches on earth, which are now, nominally, almost innumerable, may be united into one general church, headed by the same glorious name, the only name by which salvation can be obtained—and be called the *Christian* church, or the church of Christ on earth; that all the names of the different sects may be laid aside, and that there may be but one denomination known among Christians, which should be that of Biblists, or Scripturalists. I know it has been said that such a union is impossible. I cannot believe this; for Christ would not have prayed to his Father for any thing that was impossible. One great design of the Gospel was to overcome the infidelity of the world, by the unity of the church, and by her harmonious action in the cause of truth and holiness; "that they all might be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee—that they may be one in us, that the world may know that thou hast sent me!" The church is often represented as the body of Christ. And it is nowhere said that *that* body should be divided—or that there should be twenty or fifty bodies of Christ. And Paul said, "now I beseech you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no division among you; but that you be perfectly joined together, in the same mind, and in the same judgment." All that is wanting, to

effect this desirable object, is a Christian disposition, and a cheerful obedience to Christ's new commandment—"a new commandment I give you, that ye love one another."

The subject I am about to consider is, in some respects, different from all others. It is the most important, interesting, sublime, and glorious of all subjects. It leads the contemplation from earth to Heaven—from a speck to a Universe—from nonentity to Almighty, Eternal Being!

Theology, in its most extensive sense, embraces not only the Being of God, but also all his wonderful attributes, all his marvellous works and providence. The evidence relating thereto is all from one source, from one fountain of perfect truth, in which there can be no possible falsehood, error, or defect. This evidence is no less than the testimony of that Omniscient, Perfect Being, who is Truth, in the abstract—who cannot lie, who cannot deceive, who cannot prevaricate. This testimony God has delivered in different ways, and at different times, by his works, by his laws of nature, reason, and common sense, and especially, and more fully and perfectly, by the Bible, his written word, communicated through his holy Prophets, and inspired Apostles of his Son Jesus Christ. Thus we have the written testimony of God which cannot be invalidated. And although nature, reason, and common sense do not, clearly and fully, make known all things concerning the being, providence, and attributes of the Most High, yet so far as they do actually and certainly reveal and teach anything, *that* is as much the truth of God, and as truly his revelation, as what the Bible declares; for they are all his witnesses, his agents, speaking and doing as directed by his supreme, unerring will, all being his divine gifts to men. They, therefore, must all harmonize—they cannot contradict each other; for it is impossible that God can declare a fact by one witness or one agent, in one way, and contradict it in or by another; because it is essential to his perfect character, that he "is true in all his ways," as well as "holy in all his works." It is not therefore well to say (as has been said) that some parts of the Bible are contrary to, or inconsistent with reason; because, if both are the gifts of God, both his organs of speech, or his instruments of revelation, they cannot be contradictory, they must be consistent with each other. It is true, systems, or hypotheses of some human invention, re-

specting theology, may be advanced, which are inconsistent with reason; but then, if well examined, they will be found to be inconsistent with the true meaning of the Bible also, or they could not be at variance with reason, which is one of God's organs of communication, one of his agents in revelation.

I will therefore endeavor, in the next chapter, to exhibit in as concise manner as possible, all the most important evidence in the Bible, which has any relation to the nature and character of God, of his Son, and of the Holy Spirit. No doctrine should be believed, from a consideration of a part of the Bible only; but the whole evidence of revelation, fully examined in all its parts, should raise and establish, in the minds of all who love the truth, the only revealed doctrine, which is of God and not of men—no matter by what name it is called.

The passages quoted in the next chapter, I wish all to examine, fully and candidly, without reference to any creeds, litanies, catechisms, or theological writings or dogmas whatever, which are not divinely inspired; and to form their opinions or creeds, for themselves, from the whole testimony of God. For although I have a high opinion of the piety, zeal, and learning of the Fathers, Bishops, Doctors, Professors, and other learned writers in theology, yet I am persuaded that many of them unintentionally, while they thought they were doing God service, have "darkened counsel by words," have perplexed more than they have enlightened the minds of men, and involved the mysteries of godliness in more impenetrable darkness, instead of displaying with clearness the simple doctrines of the Bible, and the plain teachings of Jesus, in their clear and true light. I speak thus of the writings of the Fathers and others, *not* that I regard *them less* than others do, but that I regard the Bible *more*.—"Search the Scriptures, for it is they, which testify" of God and of Christ.

## CHAPTER II.

### QUOTATIONS FROM SCRIPTURE.

Deut. xxxii. 39. I, even I, am he, and there is no God with me. I alone am God . . . there is none besides me.—(vi. 4, and Mark xii. 29.) The Lord our God is one Lord.

Is. xlvi. 9. For I am God, and there is none else. I am God and there is none like me.

John i. 1-3. In the beginning was the word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made, that was made.

Eph. iv. 6. One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

1 Cor. viii, 6. But to us there is but one God the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by* whom are all things, and *we by* him.

1 Tim. ii. 5. For there is one God and Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

Col. i. 15. Who is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature (of all creation.)

John xvii. 3. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.—(v. 22, 23.) The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son honoreth not the Father, who sent him.—(viii. 28.) Then said Jesus unto them, when ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know, that I am *he*, and that I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please him.

Phil. ii. 5--11. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus; who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became *obedient* unto death even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.

Col. i. 16--18. For *by* him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers; all things were created *by* him and for him. And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the first born from the dead, that in all he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the *Father*, that in him all fulness should dwell.

Rom. ii. 16. In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men, by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.

John v. 26, 27. For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also. (30.) I can of mine own self do nothing; as I hear I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father who hath sent me. (43.) I am come in my Father's name.

John xii. 49, 50. I have not spoken of myself, but the Father who sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. Whatsoever I speak, therefore, even as he said unto me, so I speak.

Rom. ix. 5. Whose are the Fathers and from whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God [be] blessed forever. Amen.

John xiv. 23. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go to my Father; for my Father is greater than I.—(vi. 57.) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live *by* the Father, so he that eateth me, shall live *by* me.

1 Tim. iii. 16. And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of Angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. [The Greek proposition *εν* means *in*, not *up into*.]

John v. 18--20. Then answered Jesus and said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever he doeth, these also the Son doeth likewise. For the Father loveth the Son, and showeth him all things that himself doeth. For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth *thom*, so also the Son quickeneth whom he will.

1 John v. 19, 20. We know that we are of God. And we know, that the *Son* of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true; and we are in him that is true, in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.

John x. 24--37. If thou be the Christ tell us plainly. Jesus answered them, I have told you, and ye believed not; the works that I do, they bear witness of me. Ye are not of my sheep, &c. My Father who gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hands. I and my Father are one. I am the Son of God. If I do not the works of my Father believe me not; but if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in him.—(viii. 17, 18.) It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. I am one that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me. (23. Ye are from beneath; I am from above; ye are of this world; I am not of this world . . . he that sent me is true, and I speak to the world those things, which I have heard of him.

Heb. i. 1--9. God who at sundry times and divers manners spake, in times past, to the fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also he made the worlds; who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had, by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by

inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For unto which of the angels said he, at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son. And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits and his ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son *he saith*, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteousness in the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity, therefore God, *even* thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid, &c.

Is. xliii. 10, Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be any after me. I *even* I, *am* the Lord, and besides me there is no savior.

Mark xii. 32. For there is one God, and there is none other, but he.

Is. xlvi. 11. I am he; I am the first, and I also the last.

Rev. i. 8, 11. I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come the Almighty. I am alpha and omega, the first and the last.

1 Cor. xv. 24. Then cometh the end, when he [the Son] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father, when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. (28.) And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him, that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.

Rev. xxii. 12, 13. And behold I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am alpha and omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.—(iii. 14.) These things saith the amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.

John viii. 54. Jesus answered, if I honor myself, my honor is nothing; it is my Father that honoreth me, of whom ye say, that he is your God.—(v. 36.) The works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works



that I do bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.—(xiv. 24.) The word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent me.

Luke xxii. 70. Then said they all unto him, Art thou the Son of God? And he said unto them, Ye say that I am.

Mark xiv. 61, 62. Art thou the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am.

Matth. iii. 17. And lo, a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

John vi. 69. And we believe, and are sure, that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.

Matth. xvi. 16. And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered, Blessed art thou, Simon, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father, which is in heaven.

John xiv. 10. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works.—(vii. 16.) My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me [said Jesus.]—(xi. 26, 27.) And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea Lord, I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, that should come into the world—(xi. 22.) Martha said unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know that even now, whatever thou wilt ask of God, he will give it thee.

John iii. 16, 35. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that every one that believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. The Father loveth the Son and hath given all things into his hand.—(i. 18, 34, 49.) No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten, who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him. And I [John the Baptist] saw and bare record that this is the Son of God. Nathaniel answered and said, Rabbi, thou art the Son of God, thou art the king of Israel.—(vi. 38.) For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

Col. ii. 9. For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.

1 John iv. 15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God.

Mark x, 40. But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give.—(xiii. 32.) But of that day, and that hour knoweth no one, no not the angels, which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

Matth. xxiv. 36. But of that day, and that hour, knoweth no one, neither the angels in heaven, but my Father only.—(xx. 23.) But to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father.—(xxviii. 18, 19, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, *and* of the Son, *and* of the Holy Spirit.

Jude 4, 25. Denying the only Lord God and *our* Lord Jesus Christ. To the only wise God our Saviour be glory and majesty, dominion and power.

Isa. xlv. 22, 23. Look unto me and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else. Unto me every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear.

John iv. 23. When the true worshippers shall worship the Father, in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a spirit and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth.—(ix. 35, 38.) Dost thou believe on the Son of God? Lord, I believe, and he worshipped him.

Acts vii. 59, 60. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God* and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.—(i. 24.) And they prayed and said, Thou, Lord, who knowest the hearts of all men, shew us whether of these two thou hast chosen.

2 Cor. xii. 8, 9. And I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me.—(xiii. 14.) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

John xvi. 26--30. At that day ye shall ask in my name, and I say unto you, that I will pray the Father for you; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came from the Father and am come into the world; again, I

leave the world and go to the Father. Now are we [the disciples] sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee; by this we know that thou camest out from God. And yet [says Christ] I am not alone, because the Father is with me.—(xx. 17.) I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.

Eph. v. 20. Giving thanks always, for all things, unto God the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Matth. iv. 30. Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

John xvi. 23. In that day ye shall ask *me* nothing; verily, verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall ask the *Father* in my name, *he* will give it you.

1 Peter i. 3. Bless'd be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again into a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance, &c. (2.) Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, grace be unto you, &c.

2 John 3. Grace be with you, mercy and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.

1 Cor. i. 1, 4. Paul called to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God. I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God that is given you by Jesus Christ.

Titus ii. 13. Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity.—(iii. 4.) But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour, towards man appeared, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour.

1 Thess. i. 2, 3. Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. We are bound to thank God always.

1 Cor. i. 2, 3, 4. With all that, in any place, call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I

thank my God always, in your behalf, for the grace of God that is given you by Jesus Christ.

Acts xvii. 31. Because he [God] hath appointed a day, in which ~~he~~ will judge the world in righteousness by that man, whom he hath ordained, whereof he hath given assurance to all, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Matth. xxviii. 18, All power is given me in heaven and earth.

Rev. ii. 23. I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts, and I will give unto every one of you according to your works. (27.) Even as I have received of my Father.

Acts x. 36. The words which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ; (he is Lord of all.) (38.) Who went about doing good, for God was with him. (40.) Him God raised from the dead.

John xx. 21, 22, 23. And Jesus said unto them, As my Father sent me, so send I you: and he breathed on them and saith, Receive the Holy Spirit. Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted, and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.

Luke x. 21--23. I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth! All things are delivered unto me of the Father, and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father, nor who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son shall reveal him.—(xxii. 46.) Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.

John xiv. 9. He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father.—(viii. 58.) Verily, verily I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am.—(iii. 13.) No man hath ascended up into heaven, but he that came down from heaven, the Son of man, who is in heaven.—(vi. 62.) What, and if ye shall see the Son of man ascending up where he was before?

2 Cor. v. 18--20. All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God.

Phil. iii. 21. Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the workings whereby he is able, even to subdue all things unto himself.

Matth. xi. 27. All things are delivered unto me of my Father.

Eph. iii. 9. Hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ.

1 Cor. viii. 4. We know that there is none other God but one.

Rom. i. 3, 6. Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

Matth. xvii. 5, Mark ix. 7, and Luke ix. 35. 35. And lo a voice from the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, hear ye him.

John xvii. 5. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee, before the world was. (11.) Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are. [Similar expressions are found in verses, 17, 21, 22.] (24. Thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.—xiv. 12.) Verily, verily I say unto you, he that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also, and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to my Father.—xi. 11.) Father I thank thee, that thou hast heard me, and I know that thou hearest me always.—xvii. 2.) As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

Matth. x. 40. He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.—(xviii. 20.) For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I, in the midst of them.—(xxviii, 20.) Lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

1 Cor. xi. 3. For I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is the man, and the head of Christ is God.

## REMARKS.

Many more similar passages might be quoted, but these are probably sufficient. If not, more may be found, of a like nature, in all parts of the Bible. I therefore request all Christians, of every denomination, candidly to consider these texts; and to form their opinions, from a view of the *whole*, and not of a *part only*, without taking for their guide any extraneous matter, any humanly invented creeds, catechisms, litanies, doxologies, dogmas, dissertations, expositions, systems, writings, or preachings whatever, even of the most pious and learned uninspired men. For I am persuaded, that, if there never had been, and were not now, any theological writings whatever, except the Bible, there would be very little, if any, dissention in the religious world. All Christians, believing in one God and Father, and one Lord and Saviour, holding the Bible to be their only sure guide and director, would unite in one pure Scriptural doctrine, unclouded with unintelligible mysteries, contradictions, or impossibilities; would establish but one church, untrammelled with sectarian names, but adorned only with the glorious name of their Lord and Master, and so called The Church of Christ on earth.

But as different opinions unhappily exist, and men's minds have been, in various ways, more bewildered than enlightened, I, with diffidence, request all who believe the Bible, all who are required to believe it, to aid me, to go along with me, into a particular, clear, and general investigation of the passages of Scripture above cited, and such others as may be important, in the examination. And may that Allwise Being, who cannot direct amiss, who is able to enlighten our minds with true and holy knowledge, direct us, and show us, "the truth, as it is in Jesus."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE BEING AND ATTRIBUTES OF GOD.

IN the preceding chapter we have introduced, from the Sacred Scriptures, sufficient light, for a pole star in our theological voyage, to direct us aright in our course to the haven of truth, righteousness, and salvation. The first, the most important, the greatest subject of consideration, on all occasions, in all matters, is the existence of an almighty, overruling first cause, or source of all things—not only the Creator, but, also, the Preserver and Director of all. For, without such cause, we could have no assurance, no *expectation*, that the vast, the glorious material or immaterial creation could exist for a moment; but all nature, all thought and being must dissolve and perish,

“ Swallowed up and lost,  
In the wide womb of uncreated night,  
Devoid of sense and motion.”

The existence of a God, or first cause and governor of all things, is acknowledged by almost all intelligent beings. It is so fully made known by nature, reason and common sense, even without the confirmation of the Bible, that none but *fools*, in every sense of the word, will presume to say—*“ There is no God.”*

But there has been and still is a difference of opinion, in some respects, concerning the nature and character of Jehovah; both in respect to the mode of his existence, and the quality of his attributes. But it is agreed, by Christians of every sect, that God is an immaterial, purely spiritual Being; that he is Almighty, Omniscient, Selfexistent, and Eternal. And the Unity of God is professed by all—it is proved by all his works—it was proclaimed in a voice of

thunder from Mount Sinai, and all Nature cries aloud —“ *It must be so!*” Besides, the revealed word of God is full of this solemn, wondrous truth, “God is a spirit; and they, who worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. The Lord our God is one Lord. I, even I am he, and there is no God with me. I alone am God, and there is none besides me. For I am God and there is none else. I am God and there is none like me. To us there is but one God, the Father.” The Scriptures are full of such sublime declarations.

Bishop Pearson has said, in a plain, but forcible style, “God is a God of order and not of confusion, and therefore, of unity not admitting multiplicity. Now God is not only one, but hath an unity peculiar to himself, by which he is the *only* God, and that not only by way of actuality, but also of possibility. In the Divine Nature there is an intrinsic and essential singularity; because no other being can have any existence but from him; and whatsoever essence has its existence from another is not God.” The Bishop here quotes, John xvii. 3. “This is eternal life; that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.”

But it is said by some, that the great body of Christians in the world profess to believe in a doctrine, which seems, at first view, to be inconsistent with the strict unity of Jehovah; to wit, that the one only “God exists in three persons.” But this point I intend to consider fully and candidly hereafter. I will now only say, that I apprehend no Christian of any denomination will *deny* the *unity* of God, whatever else he may profess to believe that seems to carry a different complexion. But I will pass this subject for the present, and proceed to the consideration of the Divinity, mediation, and whole character of the *Son* of God.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DIVINITY OF THE SON OF GOD CONSIDERED.

DIVINITY and divine are ambiguous terms. The best lexicographers have given to each six or eight different meanings. Among which are the following, "pertaining to the true God, to the nature of God, extraordinary, god-like, excellent in the highest degree, apparently above what is human, a celestial being inferior to the Supreme God but superior to man, something supernatural, Deity, the Supreme Being, Godhead, the nature or essence of God, a pretended deity or false God." This ambiguity is undoubtedly one great cause of the different opinions of Christians upon the subject of the Divinity of Christ. All acknowledge that the Son of God was and is, in some sense, a Divine Being. It is therefore uncharitable and unchristianlike to accuse any sect of Christians of denying the Divinity of Christ, their Savior. Some may have wrong or inadequate ideas on the subject, but none deny the doctrine *in toto*. Now, in what sense of the word Christ is a divine being, must be decided alone by the testimony of God. For "no one (fully) knoweth the Son, but the Father." Therefore let us candidly examine the Scriptures upon this point.

The Bible most clearly reveals, that Jesus Christ, in his conception, at his birth, and during his whole life on earth, was at least an extraordinary, supernatural, excellent being, apparently above what is human. An Angel of God made known his miraculous conception. "And the Angel Gabriel said unto her, fear not, Mary, for thou hast found favor with God. And behold thou shalt conceive and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus." "The Holy Spirit shall come unto thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee; therefore that holy being, that shall be

born of thee, shall be called the Son of God." "He shall be great; and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." And at his birth, an Angel appeared from heaven, saying, Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy. For unto you is born this day a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men." Are not these circumstances, these facts, sufficient proof that Jesus Christ was an extraordinary, a superhuman being, and, in one sense at least divine?

Moreover, the whole life of Christ was distinguished by the most wonderful, extraordinary, miraculous deeds and precepts. He healed the sick, cleansed lepers, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, went about doing good; cured all manner of diseases and raised the dead to life; "he spake as never man spake, and taught as one having authority." Need we more proof that he was indeed a heavenly, a divine person? The works which he did are surely undeniable evidence of the fact. But furthermore, the circumstances of his sufferings and death were extraordinary, unspeakably wonderful. His sufferings were exceedingly great, but he complained not. "He was reviled, but he reviled not again." He yielded a cheerful submission to God his father, in all things, even unto death. He bore with patience all the evil, that was laid upon him in consequence of man's transgression. And now, view with *astonishment* the tremendous scene at his crucifixion and death! "Behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent, and the graves were opened!" As if all nature was in agony, at the death of its gloriously constituted creator and preserver! Did ever such extraordinary events take place at the birth or death of any merely human being, even the greatest and best, that ever lived? At the birth of Jacob, or Joseph, or Moses, or David, or any of the Prophets or Apostles, did an Angel and the heavenly host appear, praising God and singing, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men?" Or, at the death of any of the most holy men or Prophets, or, at the crucifixion or martyrdom of any of the inspired Apostles, was

the veil of the temple rent in twain? Were the rocks rent? Did the earth quake? Were the graves opened?—When all these things are considered, when the whole life of Christ is viewed, can there be found one professed Christian, of any denomination, yea, one intelligent being, who will not acknowledge that Jesus Christ was a wonderful person; that he was greater and more excellent than any man, that ever lived—that he was, in a high sense of the term, truly Divine?

But I am not willing to stop here;—I am not contented to annex our divine Saviour to a low sense of the term. I am not satisfied with a miniature picture of his Divinity;—I wish to look with admiration upon its *fully* portrait, drawn in the Bible, that glorious painting, which is from that Almighty Hand, which drew the plan of the universe! Here we have represented, in perfect, heavenly colors, a still more exalted Divinity of the Son of God. For, “in him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead.” His existence was not limited to the time of his birth on earth, for he had a being “before Abraham was.” “In the beginning,” when God, probably, created the heavens and the earth, “before the world was.” He was beloved by the Father, “before the foundation of the world.” He was in the bosom of the Father,—in all his designs a minister—the messenger to do his will—the Angel of his presence—the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. He was constantly performing such great and astonishing works, even to the remission of sins, as no one can do, except God be with him. He was transcendentally superior to Angels; “being made so much better than the Angels, as he hath, by inheritance, obtained a more excellent name than they;” which excellent name, I conceive to be, the Son of God, the beloved, only Son of God, the Father. This name is exclusively his; for it cannot, in the definite sense, be applied to any other being, in heaven or earth. For, “to which of the Angels said he at any time, Thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?” This name was given him, by the Almighty Nominator of all things—it was declared by angels—it was in common use with his disciples—it was repeatedly claimed by himself—it was acknowledged by his murderers—it was applied to him even by devils. I need not enlarge. *It is most evident*, that he was heavenly—that

as he was the son of that Being, who is perfect and infinite Divinity, he must partake of the nature of his Father—he must be like him—he must be Divine, in an exalted view.

But there is another, a higher, yea, the highest meaning of Divinity to be considered, that is, that the son of God is supremely Divine, the infinite Divinity. Or in other words, that he is the only self-existent, supreme, eternal God. Now the only satisfactory evidence, that can be produced to this point, must be from the Bible. And it must be acknowledged, that, as it is an affirmative proposition, it must be proved beyond all reasonable doubt, or the negative must stand. What is the language of Scripture? Hear what St. John saith. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him.” Again, “and the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth (and we beheld his glory, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father.) Many, very many believe, that these texts clearly and directly prove the supreme Divinity of Christ. But let us examine candidly and closely, and see if there are, at least, doubts, reasonable, internal doubts existing. To support the affirmative the term Word or Logos must mean or stand for Christ, the Son of God. Now it will not be pretended that Logos was a name by which Christ was called or known, when on earth. The Father Almighty never declared him by that name. The Angel did not direct Mary to call him by it, but by the name of Jesus. The Prophets (it is said by some) foretold, that he should be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, a mighty Potentate, Jehovah our righteousness, and other lofty names, but never by that of Logos. The Disciples, all the time they were conversant with him, never called him Logos. Nor has Matthew, Mark, or Luke, once given him that appellation in their Gospels. And is it certain, that John here meant Christ, when he used the word, Logos? The common meaning of the term is well understood to be, reason, wisdom, or a word spoken, saying, speech, &c. But no lexicon, that I have ever seen, defines its meaning to be Christ, or a name of the Son of God. Is it reconcilable, that sixty years after the crucifixion, John should give a new name to his Lord and Master? that he should announce him, by a name, which was never before

applied to him, from heaven or on earth? At his baptism, when the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God lit upon him, did the voice from heaven say, This is my beloved *Logos*, in whom I am well pleased? When he was transfigured upon the mountain, when "his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light"—when "a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came from the cloud"—did that voice proclaim, This is my beloved *Logos* or Word? No. On both these memorable, glorious occasions, the voice of the Almighty said, "This is my beloved son"—a name that is above every other name given on earth or in heaven. But, to come to more familiar facts: did Peter, when he was required by his Lord to say who he was, declare that he was the *Logos* of God? No; but "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Did Nathaniel, did Martha, did any one in that day call him *Logos*? Did he himself, the faithful and true witness, who could not possibly testify less than the *whole* truth, ever say, I am the *Logos*? How then can we suppose, that John by this term meant Christ, the Son of God? We know that words must often be taken in a figurative sense. But the established rule is, that the common, literal meaning of a word is not to be given up, unless that meaning is absurd in its application, inconsistent with the subject, contrary to fixed established principles, or the general tenor of God's revealed testimony.

Now, let us consider whether it is necessary, upon any just principle, to give up the common meaning of the word in this case. When closely examined how will it read, taking the literal sense? In the beginning was wisdom [or the power of God] and wisdom was with God, and wisdom was God or God was wisdom, as the Greek might be rendered; for God, is, in the abstract, all intelligence, wisdom and power. So we may here understand the term *Logos* in its literal sense, without perceiving any absurdity, inconsistency, or contradiction whatever. But John says, further, And the Word [*Logos*, or wisdom] was made flesh and dwelt among us; full of grace and truth, and we beheld his glory, &c. Here, at first view, there seems to be an inconsistency, for we do not, at once, see how wisdom, an immaterial attribute of God, can be made flesh, or become a human being, or be said to dwell among us, or how its glory should be beheld. But this difficulty, I

think, may be easily removed, if we consider how often all the attributes of God, and other impersonal things, are *personified*, and spoken of as real persons, as acting, living agents. In the Bible, wisdom is frequently represented as speaking, as crying aloud, teaching, as building her house—as dwelling—“I wisdom dwell with prudence”—as a person of great influence—“forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee—extol her, and she shall promote thee—she shall bring thee to honor, when thou dost embrace her—she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace, a crown of glory shall she deliver thee.” And many other expressions may be found that have the appearance of personality. So we may consistently read John here, after this manner. And the wisdom of God was communicated to a material being, or transferred to a fleshly “body prepared” by God for the reception thereof, and so dwelt among us; and we beheld the glory, as of the glory of the only Son of the Father; for the wisdom of God always displays the most admirable glory, in whatever form it is seen. I do not therefore perceive any necessity for rejecting the common meaning of the word *Logos*. And I am the more led to this conclusion, because John himself has not intimated any other meaning. If he had meant the Son of God, (as some contend,) he would have said so clearly;—he must have written, “In the beginning was the Son of God, and the Son of God was with God,” &c. And again, because none of the early fathers seem to have understood that John meant, by *Logos*, the Son of God—and because, for three or four of the first centuries, it was never considered as a proof text of the supreme Divinity of Christ. Still, however, for the sake of argument, for the consideration of the trinitarian ground, and to see the result, we will suppose, that the Apostle, by *Logos*, did mean the Son. By a common figure of speech, the thing spoken or written is used for the speaker or writer; as the Prophecies mean Moses and the Prophets, who wrote them. So John might, possibly, use *Logos* (the word, or the word of God, which was in these last days spoken by the Son) as meaning the Son himself. Besides, at the time when the Apostle wrote, the term *Logos* was in general use among the Platonic and other philosophers, and the learned Christian converts, with whom he was conversant. There was much controversy

respecting its meaning. Some held that *Logos* was only an attribute, or the wisdom of God, without personality; some, that he, or it, was an emanation of God personified; and others considered him as a secondary god, some *æon*, celestial spirit, or great benefactor of mankind; and all had a notion that the *Logos* was a being, or *æon* or attribute, more or less appertaining to the Deity. But at that time, none thought or spoke of him as the Supreme, Self-existent God. Such an idea had not then been conceived by any one. John might therefore think, that his Gospel would draw more attention, and be better understood by the people for whom it was specially intended, if he commenced with the use of the term *Logos*, which was more familiar to them, than that of Christ, or the Son of God. Besides it is evident that the main object of this Gospel was, to correct errors, and give a just and true character of Christ. History informs us, that John wrote his Gospel, at the request of the Bishops of Asia, to confute the heresies of Cerinthus and others. It may therefore be well here to state the tenets of Cerinthus, who was contemporary with John.

The learned T. A. Horne says, "Cerinthus was by birth a Jew, who lived at the close of the first century. Having studied literature and philosophy, at Alexandria, he attempted at length to form a new and singular system of doctrine and discipline, by a monstrous combination of the doctrines of Jesus Christ, with the opinions and errors of the Jews and Gnostics. From the latter he borrowed their *Pleroma* or fulness, their *Æons* or spirits, their *Demiurgus* or creator of the visible world, &c., and so modified and tempered these fictions, as to give them an air of Judaism, which must have considerably favored the progress of his heresy. He taught, that the supreme God was utterly unknown, before the appearance of Christ, and dwelt in a remote heaven called *πληρομα* (*pleroma*.) with the chief spirits or *æons*—That this supreme God first generated an only begotten Son, *μωυογενης*, who again begat the Word, *Logos*, which was inferior to the first born—That Christ was a still lower *æon*, though far superior to some others—That there were two higher *æon* distinct from Christ; one called *ζωη*, or life, the other *φως*, or the light—That from the *æons* again proceeded other inferior orders of spirits, and particularly one *Demiurgus*, who created this visible world

of eternal matter—That this Demiurgus was ignorant of the supreme God, and much lower than the æons, who were wholly invisible—That he was, however, the peculiar God and protector of the Israelites, and sent Moses to them, whose laws were to be of perpetual obligation—That Jesus was a mere man of most illustrious sanctity and justice, the real son of Joseph and Mary—That the æon, Christ, descended upon him in the form of a dove, when he was baptized, revealed to him the unknown Father, and empowered him to work miracles—That the æon, light, entered John the Baptist in the same manner, and therefore, that John was in some respects superior to Christ—That Jesus after his union with Christ opposed himself with vigor to the God of the Jews, at whose instigation he was seized and crucified by the Hebrew chiefs; and that when Jesus was taken captive, and came to suffer, Christ ascended up on high, so that the man Jesus alone was subject to the pains of an ignominious death—That Christ will one day return upon earth, and renewing his former union with the man Jesus, will reign in Palestine a thousand years, during which time his disciples will enjoy the most exquisite sensual delights.” (Horne’s Introduction, vol. ii. p. 316.)

Here were heresies enough, one would think, for John to confute, without supposing that he also meant to confute the heresy of denying the Supreme Deity of the Son of God, which had then never been asserted or thought of, by any being on earth, inspired or uninspired.

But if we were to take John to mean by Logos, the Son of God, it would by no means follow, that he meant God himself, but would clearly imply the reverse. How, then, are we to read or paraphrase his poem? Probably after this manner, In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, or at the commencement of the Christian era, *was*, or existed, the Son of God. This appears to be proved by other parts of the New Testament—and the Son of God was with God, (the Father)—no doubt but that the Son, the only, the well beloved Son, was then, and always with his glorious, omnipresent Father. And the Son of God was God. Here, at the first view, we are struck with amazement. For how can the Son, who is begotten of God the Father, be truly God himself? Can a



son be his own father? Was Isaac *Abraham*? Was Jacob *Isaac*? Since the world began was ever a son verily his own father? According to the laws of nature, according to all the laws of God, such an event is impossible. What, then, shall we do with John? Shall we accuse him of recording what is not true? By no means. He undoubtedly wrote by inspiration; he could not meaningly have uttered a falsehood. We are, therefore, to consider what he necessarily must have intended, by the words and language he used. If the literal sense of any of his expressions cannot consistently be received, we must adopt such figurative or restrained meaning; as the whole tenor of the Gospel teaches us must be the true sense. We know the language of the Scriptures is highly figurative, and we should take it as it is. We read in the Bible of the rising and the going down of the sun—"from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same;"—which clearly implies, that the sun moves round the earth, every twenty-four hours; which would be a motion of more than six thousand miles in every second. Now we know, that this, according to the established course of nature, is incredible. Besides, we have full evidence, that the sun is stationary, and that the earth moves round the sun, once every year. Still we are not to suppose, that "God, who spoke by the Prophets," has asserted an untruth. But we must understand the meaning to be according to the facts, that, in consequence of the diurnal revolution of the earth upon its own axis, the sun *appears to us*, to rise and to go down, and so to move round the earth in twenty-four hours. So in a variety of instances, beings and things are spoken of according to their appearance, and not according to the strictness of facts. As God is said to be "angry with the wicked every day;" when we know that it is *impossible* that he, who is infinitely full of love and benevolence, *can* possess any such unholy passions; though he might wisely adopt such measures, as would carry the appearance of anger, and even of vengeance, as is sometimes, nominally, ascribed to him. Now, that the Son of God was the Supreme God, cannot be strictly and literally true. But if he had all power in heaven and earth, either by gift or otherwise, if he was in the form of God, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person; if he was the angel of his presence, the messenger

to do his will; if he did the works of God, his Father, and spoke *his* words; if he was truly that only Son of God, in whom the Father was ever well pleased, whom he always heard, and whose requests he at all times granted, (the truth of all which cannot be doubted,) John might well say, he was God; meaning that he appeared as God, or like God, that in all his *appearance* he was God; though in *fact* he was only the Son of God, and the glorious agent, messenger, and angel of God's presence. As it is said, the sun rises because it appears to rise, while in fact-it is stationary; so the Son might be called God, because he appeared as God, or for God. Besides, being the only Son of God, he is vastly more entitled to the *name*, than Moses, or any other inspired person could be.

This construction makes the whole of the verse consistent with itself, and is supported by the 14th verse—"And the word was made flesh," that is, the Son of God became flesh, or appeared as a man, and dwelt "in a body prepared for him." Hence it is evident that Logos could mean no *more* than the *Son* of God; that he could not be the supreme, unchangable God; for God is a pure, eternal, unchangable Spirit, and never could, and never can be made or become flesh, or any material being. This construction is also consistent with John's object in writing his Gospel; for he says, at the close of it, "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son* of God," *not* that he is the supreme, self-existent God himself, but that he is the *Son*, the only Son of the only God, *his* Father and our Father. And Christ himself often, very often, confirmed the same, saying, "I am the Son of God—I came from God—I live by the Father—I have no power, but what is given me of the Father. I can of mine own self do nothing." The New Testament is full of such language. I might here add much more. But I will for the present leave St. John and go to the Apostle Paul, who, for learning, knowledge, piety, and zeal, was not a whit behind any of the Apostles.

In the second Chapter of Philippians Paul says, "Let the same mind be in you, that was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. But made himself of no reputation," &c. This passage has been considered, at least, the second best proof

text of the Supreme Divinity of Christ; as, according to our translation, it asserts directly and clearly his equality with God. It may be evidence of his inferior or less than supreme Divinity; but when it is taken for proof of his *supreme* Divinity; it appears to me to be a *felo de se*; for the *form* of God, *μορφή Θεου*, the appearance of God cannot be *really* God—the form or appearance of a being cannot be the being himself, but only his semblance—the portrait of a man is not the real man, but only the representation of him. Again, he “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” If he was equal with God, he could not be, in truth, that God with whom he was equal. Equality and sameness are perfect opposites. We cannot show that any being is equal, unless we exhibit some other different being with whom he is equal. Washington was equal to Cincinnatus, but he was not Cincinnatus—they were two perfectly distinct beings, though there was in some respects a likeness between them. Equality cannot be ascribed to the Almighty; because there is no being with whom he can be equalized, or compared. Where there is equality between any beings, it must be reciprocal. If we can say that the Son of God is equal with God, his Father Almighty, then we may say that God the Father is *equal* (not superior) to his Son, who is dependent on him for his very existence and support. And, if the Holy Spirit is God, equal with the Father, (as Trinitarians hold,) then he has another equal. And so the Supreme God, who *alone* is Jehovah, and who has said, “There is *no* God with me,” and as Paul said “To us there is but one God, the Father,” would have two equals. Or, in other words, there would be three Supreme Gods—and of course no Supreme God at all. Is this the language of the Bible?—But it is said that these three are one, (though the laws of God and nature declare that it is impossible, that three can be but one.) To say that any being, created or uncreated, is equal with himself, is nothing less than absurdity and nonsense, an enigma beyond the power of the Almighty to solve. For unity cannot possess equality, there being nothing with which it can be equalized. If there is one, and but one, Supreme God, there cannot be another being equal to him. This text therefore, as translated, if it proves any thing, proves too much. It proves the existence of two equal supreme Gods; which no Christian can

believe. It therefore destroys itself, as a proof text. But if we go to the original, instead of our translation, we may avoid all seeming difficulty and contradiction; though we may not be able to substantiate a particular favorite doctrine. But it is better to enjoy the pleasure of finding out what is true, than to perplex ourselves in a fruitless search for what we *wish to be* true, but cannot find. It is evident that the passage we are considering is not well and truly translated. I will therefore, after quoting the original, give what I think is a correct, true, sensible, and nearly literal translation of the 6th, 7th, and 8th verses.

Ὁς ἐν μορφῇ Θεοῦ υπαρχων, οὐκ ἄρπαγμα ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἡμοῖα Θεῷ, ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσε, μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιωματι ἀνθρώπων γενομενός· καὶ σχηματι ἐυρέθεις ὡς ἀνθρώπος· ἐταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν, γενομενὸς ὑπῆκοος· μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταύρου.

“Who having the appearance of God, did not consider it an assumption to be like God. Nevertheless, he divested himself of that appearance, taking the resemblance of a servant, being in the likeness of men, and found in *form* as a man, he humbled himself, being submissive unto death, even the death of the cross.” This reading will be intelligible, and consistent with itself and the whole tenor of the Scriptures. Though it will afford no proof of the Supreme Divinity of Christ; it will fully prove, that Jesus Christ is, in an exalted sense, truly divine; that he is “Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.” But that he has no glory, but what is given him by the Father—he says, “it is my Father, that glorifies me.” And again, Paul, when meditating concerning his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh, says, in the 9th Chapter of Romans, 5th verse, “Of whom are the fathers, and from whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, (or descended,) who is over all, God Blessed forever. Amen.” Some have said that this text is conclusive evidence, that Christ is the Omnipotent God, and Supreme Governor of the Universe. If by *all* here is meant all creation, all being, and Christ is God over that *all*, and has originally, in and of himself, power and supreme rule over the same, then it would seem that he *must* be the Supreme God and Governor; and of course that the Father of the Universe is dethroned or annihilated! But we had

better consider a little what Paul must have intended by the word *all*, which is an adjective, and of itself alone cannot convey any sense or meaning whatever; it must always refer to something either expressed or understood. To obtain the true meaning of any doubtful word or text, it is necessary to examine the context, and often other parts of the same epistle. By the previous verses it appears, that Paul had been seriously contemplating upon the state and condition of the Jews, "his brethren and kinsmen according to the flesh," that is, they were his ancestors, they were all Israelites, all descended from Jacob who was called Israel—they had been a people highly favored of God, to them pertained "the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the holy promises; of whom were the fathers." And after stating these high privileges of the Jews, he comes to the climax, and says, "From whom came (or descended) *Christ*," who is superior to *all* of them, to the fathers, and all the inspired Prophets, even David, and Moses, and all the illustrious Israelites. The advent of such a superior person as Christ, from Jewish ancestry, Paul seems to consider as the highest privilege and honor, that was ever bestowed upon his nation, and *for which*, it is natural to suppose, that his patriotism and his piety induced him to breathe forth his grateful emotions, "Blessed be God forevermore. Amen." From a close examination of the original of the text and context, I cannot doubt but such was Paul's meaning. The literal meaning of the Greek preposition *επι* is, superior to, or before; and *πατων* (all) must be limited to what preceded; to the fathers and the distinguished Israelites. And it is perfectly natural that Paul should here have prayed—God blessed, or blessed be God forevermore. Amen!—as is the natural translation of the original words, *ευλογητος Θεος*. For I find the substantive verb *be* is generally omitted in the Greek, as in 2 Cor. i. 3, *Ευλογητος ο Θεος*, "Blessed be God," &c.; and in other places. Besides, if Paul had intended to inform the Romans, that Christ is the self-existent God, he would have said so, in unequivocal, plain terms; he would have written *thus*, "Christ, who is the Supreme God." If such were the fact, he would have expressed it plainly, and not have involved it in a cloud of thick darkness. I cannot, therefore, but conclude, that there is *no* proof in this

text of the *supreme* Divinity of Christ; while there *is* satisfactory evidence, that he is a Divine Being, transcendantly *above* men and angels, but *less* than God Almighty. The latter position is well supported by all the Gospels, and the declaration of Christ himself; and the voice of God repeatedly proclaimed it from heaven. See the quotations from Scripture, in the 2d Chapter of this work.

## CHAPTER V.

### SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

ALTHOUGH we have found and noticed abundant evidence to prove that Christ is an extraordinary, a divine person, we have not yet discovered that he is *supremely* divine; that the *Son* of God is truly *God himself*. We will look further; for we are seriously desirous to find the evidence, if it can be found in any divine revelation.

In the 1st Epistle to Tim. iii. 16, Paul says, "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received *up into* glory." And manifestly, this text, as in our translation, is incorrect in some respects. Many of the most learned critics, who have examined all the manuscripts extant, are of opinion, that the reading of *Θεός* (God) in this verse, is spurious; that it never was so written by Paul. But I will here remark, that it is not pretended that there are in existence any original manuscripts of Paul, or any of the Apostles, or that there has been any since the first or second centuries, or that any of the versions or translations of the Scriptures, that have been made, were so made from the original manuscripts; but from a copy or a copy of a copy, perhaps the thousandth copy of nine hundred and ninety-nine successive copies; and these all done by uninspired, imperfect men. Therefore it would not have been unreasonable to suppose, what we now know to be the fact, that there have crept in some unintentional errors; especially when we find that almost every word in the ancient Greek writings is abbreviated; that the vowels are seldom written or inserted; as for *Θεός* (God) is written *Θς* (God,) from which *Ος* (who) differs only in the omission of the small dash in the

first Greek letter. Besides we are informed from good authority, that copyists, from good motives, made frequently some verbal alterations, not for the purpose of changing, but *explaining* the meaning of the passage. As for instance, a copyist comes to the adjective  $O\varsigma$ —and finding no antecedent substantive, with which it can agree, or to which it can refer, he concludes that there is a mistake, that there should have been a dash in the first letter which would make it  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  (God);—he therefore *corrects* it, as he supposes, and writes it  $\Theta\varsigma$ ; thus making a great change by a mere dash of the pen. And we are assured from good authority, that in one of the most ancient manuscripts of this epistle, the dash in the  $\Theta$  in this text appears to be written in different ink from the rest of the epistle, and therefore could not have been originally so written.—Another fact worthy of notice is, that this text was never quoted as a proof text of the Deity of Christ, in the time of the Arian controversy, or by any of the Greek fathers, before the last of the fourth century, as it must have been, if the manuscripts had been  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  (God); for it is now considered by Trinitarians (as our translation is) a strong proof text.

Those, who reject the reading of  $\Theta\epsilon\omicron\varsigma$  as spurious, are not agreed what the true reading, instead of it, is. Some are for reading  $O\varsigma$  (who, or he who,) and others for  $\Theta$  (which.) Now Griesbach and others are in favor of  $O\varsigma$ . I cannot see how that can be correct, as there is no antecedent expressed, or necessarily understood, with which it can agree— $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$  (mystery) being of the neuter, and  $\epsilon\upsilon\sigma\epsilon\beta\epsilon\iota\alpha$  (godliness) of the feminine gender, and  $\Theta$  of the masculine. But  $\Theta$  (which) will agree with  $\mu\upsilon\sigma\tau\eta\rho\iota\omicron\nu$  (mystery,) both being neuter. And I am inclined to believe, from examination of all the authorities, that  $\Theta$  is the true reading, and that the whole verse should be translated and read, as hereafter interpreted. I will give the original, and what I consider a correct translation, for consideration.

*Ομολογουμενωσ μεγα εστι το της ευσεβειας μυστηριον. Θεοσ  
εφανερωθη εν σαρκι, εδικαιωθη εν πνευματι, ωφθη αγγελουσ,  
εκηρυσχη εν εθνεσιν, επιστευθη εν κοσμω, ανεληφθη εν δοξη.*

And manifestly, great is the mystery of piety, which (mystery) was made known by the flesh (that is, by Christ in the flesh,) justified by the Spirit, perceived by angels,



preached unto the Gentiles, believed in the world, received *with* glory. But, with either reading or translation, I cannot perceive that it affords any proof concerning the Supreme Divinity of Christ. The text, if taken strictly literal, according to the common meaning of words, would be absolutely incredible; for it is not to be supposed that God, the invisible Spirit, was manifest (that is, visible) in the flesh, or that he was justified in the Spirit, or that he was received *up into* glory.—Let us look for some passage more to the point.

Again Paul says, Heb. i. 8, “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; a sceptre of righteous is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” This passage is undoubtedly quoted from the forty-fifth Psalm, 6th verse, &c. The words, “but to the Son he saith,” are not there used; yet it is supposed that the writer of this Psalm had a prophetic reference to the Son of God. If so, is it not proof that the Son had an everlasting throne, which belonged to him exclusively, and that he is the King and Lord thereof, and sits and will forever sit thereon? And if there is but one everlasting throne and one Eternal King, does it not follow, that the Son is the Eternal King, who sits and will sit upon his everlasting throne forever and ever? And is not this full proof of the Supreme Divinity of the Son of God? But stop. We seem to be plunging into an inextricable labyrinth. We seem to be dethroning the Almighty Father, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, and leaving him without an everlasting throne, and we have given *that* exclusively to the Son. This demands serious and solemn consideration, before its truth is acknowledged. Let us examine this matter thoroughly. Let us ascertain, if this Psalm was originally addressed to Christ. Is there any internal evidence of it, in the whole Psalm? The name of Christ, or the Son of God, is not once mentioned. The Psalm is headed, “A Song of Loves.” It speaks of “the things made as touching the king;” of his fairness and grace, and the blessings of God upon him; of his power, majesty, style, and the quality of his garments; of his palaces; of king’s daughters among his honorable women, with the queen at his right hand, in gold of Ophir, and a variety of the most extravagant displays of earthly beauty and splendor, all which have no likeness or resemblance to

anything pertaining to the mild, unassuming, peaceful Jesus Christ, whose kingdom and majesty are not of this world. Any one, I think, who will read the whole of this Psalm, must be satisfied that it was written in the lofty hyperbolical style, usual in that day, for a song, to celebrate the marriage or the inauguration and consecration of some earthly king. But should it be considered as prophetically applying to Christ, it is a clear demonstration of the negative of his Supreme Divinity. For in the 2d verse it is said, "God, hath blessed thee forever." And in the 7th verse, "God, thy God, hath anointed thee, with the oil of gladness above thy fellows." Now, if he is the Supreme God, could there be another God above him, to bless him? Could he have another God, to anoint or consecrate him with the oil of joyful transport above his fellows; and yet be the only Supreme God? Could he be an independent being, when he received his consecration from another?

But the learned and orthodox Professor Griesbach, and many others of high authority, translate *θρονοῦ σου ο θεός* not, "thy throne O God," but, "God is thy throne, or support;" which I think is the correct translation, and expresses what must have been the meaning of the writer of the epistle. And I am of this opinion, not only because *ὁ θεός* appears to be in the nominative case, for it is undoubtedly sometimes so written and used for the vocative—Mark writes for O my God, my God, *Ὁ θεός μου, ὁ θεός μου* but Matthew in a parallel text, has for the same, *θεε μου θεε μου*—but because, the facts and circumstances connected with this passage convince me, that *ὁ θεός* here must be considered as in the nominative, and so support the translation of Griesbach. In this 8th verse, and the three preceding, the writer represents God himself as the speaker—"And to the Son he (God) saith, thy throne, O God, is" &c.; which would be the same as, "And unto the son he (God) saith, thy throne, O myself, is," &c., unless the Son is another God; for the speaker certainly is one God, and the person spoken to must be another different being—and, if he is God, must make a second God. Besides the expression is inconsistent and unnatural. It makes God, in the first place, call his own son (rightly) the *Son* of God, and in the next place, *God himself*—a contradiction. The word *God* seems to be unnecessary or surplusage, as the

sense would be the same without it—as, “to the son he saith, thy throne is forever,” &c. The fact is, there is no other instance in the Bible where God calls his Son *God*. And I do not believe he does here. He has never, “in a voice from heaven,” said, Thou art my beloved Son, O God; or this God is my beloved Son. The translation of Griesbach is consistent with the facts and circumstances of the case, and with the whole of what is stated in the first Chapter of the epistle. The object of the writer seems to be, to place the Son somewhere above men and angels, but below the Almighty; to give him more power and glory than any being, except his Father; to show that he is, indeed, *conjunctissimus Deo*. But if the common translation must be received, we have nothing certain, but inconsistency, confusion, and doubt. And the doubts, which have long existed, whether Paul was the author of this epistle must be confirmed; for it would be rendered almost certain that he could not be; because, in none of the acknowledged epistles of Paul, is the Son ever called God. And then there would be no certainty that this epistle was from the pen of an inspired writer.

But the 10th verse of the 1st chapter of Hebrews is said to be a powerful proof of the supreme Divinity of the Son of God. ‘And thou Lord, in the beginning, hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thy hands.’ This is a quotation from the 102d Psalm, though the first part of it is incorrectly quoted. There we read, beginning at the 24th verse, “And I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days; thy years are throughout all generations. Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of thy hands,” &c. Is it possible, that any one, after reading this passage, can pretend that it is applicable to the Son of God? That David, when he prayed, O my God, did not mean that Almighty God and Father, to whom he always prayed, but that he meant his *Son*?—The case is too plain to admit an argument. It should, however, be observed, that it does not appear from Paul’s epistle, if it is well examined, that Paul meant to apply this passage to the Son, as he does not preface it, as in the 8th verse—“And unto the Son he saith, thou Lord, &c. But if Paul considered the 102d Psalm at all, he must have meant the Supreme

Lord and Father of the Universe. If the Father Almighty is not *clearly* referred to in this passage, I cannot perceive that it is *certain*, that he is spoken of anywhere in the Bible. And of course it must be a matter of uncertainty, whether he, and his infinite perfections and glorious attributes have ever been revealed to us in his word.

What Paul says, Col. i. 15-17, is thought to have a bearing upon this subject. "Who (i. e. Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first born of every creature" (of all creation it should be,) *πρωτογεννητος*, for by him were all things created, that are in heaven and upon earth, &c. Can the image of God be the invisible God himself? Can the portrait of Washington, now before me, be Washington himself? Never, till the laws of God and nature are altered. But farther, Christ is the first born of every creature, or of all creation. First born means first created, or first caused to exist. There must be a cause for the existence of every being, that is created or born. No being ever caused his own existence. The Almighty himself did not cause his own existence. He existed eternally without cause; while he is the cause of all other existence. Then, as we are assured that Christ was born, that his being was caused, it is impossible that he can have existed eternally *without cause*. Of course he is not the eternal God; he cannot be supremely Divine. But he holds an extraordinary, a transcendentally exalted rank in the scale of being, as he was the first begotten, or first caused of all creation. So, as he is the first, he must be a part, or one of, all creation, as the Bible informs us, his existence was caused, yea, by that Being, who, he has declared, is *his* Father and our Father, and the Father of all created or caused being. The first born of all creatures must be a person created, as much as the second born, or third, or any one afterwards. Cain was the first born of the human race; but he was as truly one of the race as Abel was, or as Moses or the Prophets were. But all things were created *by him* (the Son,) that are in heaven or upon earth," &c. And John says, i. 3d, "All things were made by him." At first view, here seems to be an assertion that the Son of God, and not the Father, created all things. But a little reflection, examination, and reference to other texts of Scripture, will make all plain. In the first place, we have just shown that the Son is the image of the

invisible God, and so could not be God himself; and that he derived his own existence from the Father; and that he has no power but what is given him of his Father, that the Son can do nothing of himself, is undeniably proved in the Scriptures; therefore he could not, of himself create all things, or anything. And then Paul does not say that he (the Son) *created* all things, but that all things were created *by him*; as "God spoke *by his* Son, in these last days, *by whom* also he made the worlds." It is nowhere said that Christ, or the Son, was the Creator of the worlds or of all things, but that they were created or made by him. Solomon's temple was built by the workmen, but Solomon was the builder; and the mechanics, who framed it, by Solomon's commands were not King Solomon. A treaty is made by an ambassador, by virtue of the power given him by his king, yet it is strictly the king, who, makes the treaty; and such ambassador is never thought to be the king. A thousand cases of this kind might be suggested. But reason and common sense, in accordance with the general tenor of the Scriptures, will easily explain and reconcile all texts of this nature; will teach clearly the difference between principal and agent, between original and derived power, between an independent, self-existent Being, and one of derived, dependent existence and power, and between the Father and the Son.

In Acts xx. 28. Paul is said to have charged the brethren and elders "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." This passage, if we were to give to every word the literal common meaning, would fill us with amazement, and would contradict acknowledged facts. God (in the common sense the Supreme God) is a purely, spiritual Being, without any kind of materiality; and blood is material. Therefore the Supreme Spirit could not purchase, or acquire, the church with his *own blood*, or by shedding or giving his *own blood*; because he had not, he could not, without a change of his immutable nature, possibly have any blood, strictly of his own, to shed, or bestow, for any object whatever. Are we then to reject this passage from the word of God, because, in its strict literal sense, it appears to be inconsistent, impossible, and untrue? By no means. But we must endeavor to find its true meaning, by comparing it with other texts of Scripture. There

is nothing in the Bible that is false, if rightly understood; but there are many truths, that are veiled in figurative language, in ambiguous words, or hyperbolical expressions. As Christ represented, that every one must *hate* father and mother, brother and sister, &c. before he could be his disciple. Now it is evident, that he did not mean that this should be understood literally; because he constantly taught the duty of love to father and mother, and even to all mankind—and that a man could not love *God*, if he loved not his brother.” But by hating, here, he undoubtedly meant a restrained, subordinate love, a lesser love for father and mother, than for *him*. As he said at another time, “whosoever loveth father or mother *more* than me is not worthy of me.” So Paul here could not have meant literally that God purchased the church with his own blood, the blood of the Spiritual Jehovah; because that was impossible; but, he must have meant, with his own Son’s blood, who was connected with flesh and blood; and who, Paul says, in Ephesians, “loved the Church and gave himself for it”—shed his blood and sacrificed his life for it. Besides, “which he hath purchased with his own blood” is not a correct and good translation of the Greek, *ἣν περιποιήσατο δια τοῦ αἵματος τοῦ ἰδίου*; but it may be rendered, “which he hath acquired, by peculiar blood”—not by common blood, such as used to be offered in Jewish sacrifices, as the blood of bulls and goats, nor any human blood; but special blood of his Son, Jesus Christ. Such, I am persuaded, is the true sense of the text. And thereby will all difficulty and inconsistency be removed, and the passage will read according to known facts. But if any should doubt this construction, there is another matter to be considered relating to this passage. It is contended that *τοῦ Θεοῦ* in reading, “the church of God,” is spurious—that it should be the church of the Lord *τοῦ κυρίου*. This reading is supported by Griesbach and other high authorities. But it must be acknowledged, that the present reading, *τοῦ Θεοῦ* (of God,) is held to by other authorities. It is not necessary here to state them. I do not consider it material to the question under consideration, which reading is adopted. For if *τοῦ Θεοῦ* (of God) is correct, to be consistent and intelligible, it must be understood, not in the common, but in an inferior sense, so as to mean the *Son* of God, or Christ;

and then it will be, in fact, the same as *του κυριου* (of the Lord.) Or the last part of the verse must be taken according to the foregoing interpretation, not as "his own blood," the blood of God, (which is an idea expressive, at least, of horror, if not of impiety, and which I am loth to make use of,) but of his only Son, whose blood, every one must acknowledge, and the Scriptures fully declare, was shed or given for the church, and to effect the redemption of the whole world. But upon any consistent interpretation of the passage, I cannot perceive that it furnishes any proof of the *supreme* Divinity of Christ, the Son of God.

Again, Paul speaking of Christ, Phil. iii. 21, says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." This text is considered by some a strong proof of the *supreme* Divinity of Christ; because they say, that none but the Almighty Creator and Director can change our vile body into a glorious body like Christ's—that it requires the exercise of Almighty power. But Paul says, Christ shall perform it—that he is able to do it. But how is he able to perform such a glorious work? Has he the power, originally, underivedly, of himself? Or was it given him? Or who gave it him? Christ himself has repeatedly, clearly, and fully told us; and surely, no one can wish for higher evidence, than the testimony of the "faithful and true Witness," who sealed his testimony with his own blood. Hear a part of what he has said. He often said, that of himself he could do nothing—that the works which he did were not his own, but the Father's who sent him. Verily, verily, he said, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do—that even the words which he spoke were not his, but the Father's—that his Father was greater than he. But he also informs us, that his Father had given him all power in heaven and on earth—power over all flesh, even to give eternal life. Surely, then, power to change our vile body must be included in all this wonderful power. Now observe his practice. When he was about to perform any great and glorious work, such as raising the dead to life, he always prayed to his Father to enable him to perform it. And he gave thanks to his Father for hearing him, and granting his request. Unquestionably, therefore, Paul must have meant,

that by virtue of such given, bestowed power, Christ would execute a glorious change in our bodies; and that *thus* he was able, and not from any underived power, in himself, of original possession. This passage therefore, taken in connexion with other parts of the New Testament, affords no evidence of the supreme, underived Divinity of the Son of God; but, in my opinion, it does show him to be, in a high sense, a Divine Person—to be, according to an expression of the great Origen, “not *the* Divine Being, but *a* divine being—or according to a Latin writer of eminence, a being, “who is *conjunctissimus Deo.*”

As I am about to leave, for the present, the further consideration of the preaching and epistles of St. Paul, I intend in the next Chapter to make some general remarks concerning this great Apostle; and to consider the general tenor of his preaching and writings, in relation to the character of Christ, the Son of God.



## CHAPTER VI.

SAME SUBJECT.—PAUL AND HIS PREACHING. AND WRITINGS  
CONCERNING THE SAME CONSIDERED.

PAUL was a Jew, descended from Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin, though by birth a Roman, born in Tarsus, a city of Celicia. He was educated according to the strictest principles of the Pharisees. He was undoubtedly a conscientious believer and worshipper of the One ever living and true God, the God of his fathers, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; but before his conversion he had no just views of the Savior, the Christ, the Son of God. He was a person of superior intellectual capacity, of great learning, and well instructed in the laws and traditions of the Jews, having been a pupil under the celebrated Gamaliel; a learned doctor. And he was by nature remarkably resolute, persevering, and zealous. Such was, in brief, the character of this distinguished Apostle, whom the Lord declared unto Ananias to be “a chosen vessel” unto him, or as it should be rendered, an instrument, or Apostle, of my first, or highest choice, *σκευος εκλογης μοι*. And when, in addition to what nature and education had done for him, and the confidence of the Son of God placed in him, he *also* received the gift of the Holy Spirit, shall not all Christians place full reliance upon him? He was appointed to bear the name, to display the character, to proclaim the Gospel of Christ, not only to the Jews, the children of Israel, but also to kings, and to Gentiles. Therefore let all denominations of Christians now hear and receive his teachings, as the words of heavenly truth—for, that he was an inspired Apostle, none can doubt. Let us take a brief view of his preaching and writings respecting Christ.

The principal object of Paul's preaching and writing seems to have been, to give a full display of the life, character, merits, sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, the Son of God. And for this purpose was he chosen. Such was his commission. And it was then especially necessary; as at that time neither of the Gospels had been published. Christ was the theme of his first discourse, and in all his epistles; and *his* name was the last upon his tongue, the last from his pen. Immediately after his conversion, faithful to his commission, "he straightway preached Christ, that he is the Son of God, that he is the very Christ"—not that he is merely a righteous man or a great prophet, whom God hath highly exalted as a prince and a saviour—not that he is among the Angels the highest of the high; but that, he is "made so much *better* than the Angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." If volumes, if more books were written upon this subject, than the world could contain, they could not truly express *more*, than is comprehended in this short, plain, but glorious declaration of Paul—"that he is the Christ, the Son of God"—the constituted Savior—"the image of the invisible God—the brightness of his glory, the express likeness of his person," and that only Son, in whom, it pleased the Father, that all fulness should dwell. Such was the general representation of Christ, drawn by this able, this inspired Apostle Paul. He never said or wrote that he was merely a righteous person, or that he was only a great prophet. Neither did he ever preach or write that he is the *supreme self-existent God*. And Paul says, that "he kept back nothing, that he had not shunned to declare the whole counsel of God." And if he had not told us so, no one could doubt but that Paul performed his *whole* duty faithfully. He could have no inducement to do otherwise—he *could* not do otherwise, for he was under the constant inspiration and direction of the Almighty.

If then Christ is the self-existent God, as some profess to believe, Paul must have kept back that truth—he has not declared the whole counsel of God—he has not been faithful, as he avowed and we believe that he was, in all things; for it cannot be pretended that he ever expressly taught such a truth. Now if the proposition is true, Paul either *knew* it, it was revealed unto him, or he did *not* know it,

it had *not* been revealed unto him. If he did not know the fact, he was surely justifiable in not stating it—indeed he could not possibly state, he could not make known, what he did not himself know. This ground, I presume, no one will take. I think all must agree, that, if the allegation is true, it was undoubtedly revealed and made known unto Paul. It is certain, therefore, as he did not plainly preach the doctrine for truth, that, if it is true, he kept back something most important—that he did not declare the whole counsel of God—that he did not testify the whole truth clearly; and so he has deceived us, in his solemn protestation of faithfulness.—Probably there is now no professed Christian who will openly call Paul's character in question, attempt to discredit him as a witness, or deny his inspiration, superior intellectual powers, and capacity for the display and support of revealed truth; if there be any, it is fortunate for the character of Paul, that he is fully supported by the other Apostles, and by the Son of God himself, who was declared from heaven to be, emphatically, "the faithful and true Witness." The testimony of Paul being thus corroborated, the only alternative is, to show that this doctrine is not true, that it cannot be supported by Paul's testimony. And here, I will remark, that the advocates for the doctrine of the supreme Divinity of Christ rely principally upon St. Paul and St. John for the support of their doctrine. We shall see, upon what foundation they have built their faith—if it is better than that on which the foolish man built his house, which fell, for the want of a solid, permanent foundation.

It is an established rule of evidence, that the *onus probandi* is with the affirmative. If a proposition is affirmed to be true, it must be so proved. Proof of the negative is not required. But although we perceive no evidence in favor of the affirmative proposition, that Christ is truly God, but all seems adverse thereto; yet we are willing to undertake to prove the negative, so far as a negative can be proved; and this may be done by Paul's testimony alone. It is an acknowledged principle, that, when any fact, if it exists, must be fully known to a witness, and that witness, when duly called on to testify the whole truth, does not disclose that fact at all, or not clearly, such circumstance is full, conclusive, against the existence of such fact. And

this rule of evidence will apply more forcibly to divinely inspired witnesses, as they could not give an imperfect or partial testimony, by mistake, forgetfulness, or design. For so far as relates to their apostleship and their duty as Christ's ministers, they, as Paul says, "know all things;" and keep back nothing, but declare the whole counsel of God. Now what does the inspired Paul testify concerning Christ? From first to last, from his conversation to his last breath, he declares, that he is the Son of God—that he came down from heaven, on commission from the Father, for the salvation of mankind—that he was crucified, dead, and buried—that he derived his first existence from his Father, by him was raised from the dead, and from him receives all his power of action, and by him is seated on the throne, at his right hand in glory. Paul nowhere says that he was the supreme, self-existent God. And what authority have uninspired men to say it? Do they know more than Paul did? Have they received a fuller revelation? Show me the authority. I do not find it in the Bible. It is not there. If it had been revealed to Paul, he could not have omitted a matter of such infinite importance. He could not have committed an act, the like of which, in human affairs, would consign a man to the Penitentiary for life. Besides, he does state many facts, which fully disprove the assertion. He does declare that Christ is the Son of God—that his very existence is derived from his Father—that he is, in every respect, a dependent being, which could not be, if he is the supreme God, the first cause of all being—that there is but one God, and that is, the Father, and not the Son. Paul expressly says, "God raised up Christ; and that he liveth by the power of God."

But, besides Paul's preaching and writings, consider his practice; for preaching, without concordant practice, availeth little. Paul's faith is known by his works. He practised what he preached. We find that Paul constantly gave his highest thanks and praises to God the Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."—"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."—"Giving thanks always for all things unto God, even the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—"Now unto God, even our Father, be glory forever and ever."

Amen.”—“That ye may glorify God even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”—“We give thanks to God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” The Epistles are full of such devout ejaculations of Paul to God the Father. But not one to the Son can be found! Does this look like proof, that Paul considered the Son *God*, or equal with God? True, he is full of gratitude to the Son, for his amazing love, in being willing to suffer and die for sinners; and he rejoices with joy unspeakable for the gift of the Son. But he never ascribes to him supreme worship, nor supreme power.

He has never even given him the name of God, as is very frequently given to the Father; as, “to the glory of God the Father—giving thanks to God the Father,” and hundreds of such like expressions may be found in the Epistles.

Another circumstance in Paul’s life and writings shows clearly, that he did not, that he could not believe in the Supreme Divinity of Christ. It cannot be pretended that the Jews, or Paul before his conversion, had any idea that the Savior or Messiah, that was to come, was the Almighty God. They believed that he would be a holy, an exalted person, and that he would be a temporal deliverer. This error Paul acknowledged and renounced, and urged the renunciation of it upon all the Jews. But he never acknowledged that he had been in an error, a gross error, in *not* believing that the Son, the Messiah, is very God. Nor did he ever endeavor to reclaim the Jews from such a God-provoking error, as it must have been, if it *was* one. He gives no account of any time or place, when he was converted upon this subject. He never preached to the Jews or Gentiles that they must believe this doctrine or they could not be saved. He never told them, that it was revealed to him from heaven, when he had several miraculous communications with the Son of God. If it was so revealed, if it is true, and Paul, an Apostle of Jesus Christ, held his peace, would not the very stones of the streets have risen and proclaimed it? Would not all Nature have become vocal, and echoed the solemn truth throughout the world? When we consider how *fully* and *plainly* Paul preached upon subjects of minor importance, to that of supreme Di-

vinity of Christ (if it is well founded)—how he testified *clearly* as to the advent of the Christ, the Son of God, the Messiah sent from the Father—as to his whole life, his miracles, sufferings, crucifixion, death, resurrection and ascension, and find nothing declaratory of his self-existent Deity, we must say, that this perfect silence of Paul, this total absence of all evidence on the subject, is, of itself alone, full, positive proof that the doctrine cannot be true. For there is such a thing as silent eloquence—there is such a thing as dumb testimony. The great Poet describes “Cæsar’s dumb wounds,” as moving, powerful, proclaiming witnesses. If Paul then has kept back nothing—if he has declared the whole counsel of God, and yet not told us, in plain terms, that Christ is God—if he was not ignorant or unfaithful, his silence upon this subject, his neglecting to establish its truth, under all the circumstances, amply proves the negative. All the writings of the ancient Fathers and of modern great theologians, all the creeds, catechisms, council decisions, and dogmas of human invention, are not sufficient to overthrow what Paul has established, even by his *silence*. This kind of evidence is often strong, irresistible, conclusive, and sometimes the only evidence that can be obtained in reference to the establishment of negatives. For instance, what evidence is there, what can there be, to prove that Washington had *no* son, but the silence of history, the total absence of all evidence of the affirmative? Besides, the case under consideration is much stronger than the one put, or any that can be suggested in human affairs; because there is not only a want of proof, that the Son of God *is* God, but it is impossible that it *can* be proved. It is impossible that the Almighty himself can prove, that his own Son is *himself*, that he is *not* his own Son. It is impossible for him to prove, that he, the essentially unchangeable, infinite Spirit, ever was, or could become, man, one of his own creatures, or any maternal being; unless he can *change* his *immutable* nature and attributes. Whereas in the case put of Washington, it was not only possible, but an event probable and to be expected, that he should have had a son. It is not so, in respect to the Deity of the Son of God. *That* is something, that was *never* expected, never probable, never *possible*. But we are not obliged to rely entirely upon this kind of evidence; for the Epistles are full of direct, ex-

press evidence to the point, some of which I have quoted, and much more may be seen, if sought for. The whole tenor and substance of Paul's testimony appears to me to be, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God the Father, the Messiah, anointed and sent by God into the world, for the redemption of lost men—that he lived a perfect life, in “a body prepared for him”—that he performed great miracles—that he suffered and died, was raised from the dead, received up into heaven, and seated at the right hand of God the Father—that he was not very God, or the supreme, self-existent God, but was the *only son* of God, entirely dependent upon God his Father, for his existence and support; for Paul says, expressly, “he liveth, by the power of God.” Therefore, without now being more particular, upon a full view of the whole of Paul's testimony, we must adopt one of two courses. We must give up the doctrine of Christ's Supreme Deity, as unsupported; or we must sacrifice Paul, and reject his testimony entirely. For they cannot both stand together—they are as different as light and darkness—they are as inconsistent as entity and nonentity—we cannot hold to both. Choose ye, therefore, which ye will retain. One is the inspiration, the word of God by his holy Apostle—the other is, I conceive, the erroneous fabrication of uninspired, though very good, men. I speak not thus plainly, to wound the feelings of any pious Christian. I would not willingly grieve the good spirit of any man living. But for the love of sacred truth, I have used, what some may call bold expressions, while I hope my heart is filled with sincere love to God, and to all his intelligent creatures. If I am in an error, I pray, that I may be converted therefrom—if the truth is told, as it is in Jesus, I hope it will be kindly received, though it comes from a weak, unknown, but well-meaning layman. “Search the Scriptures daily, whether these things be so.” Here, for the present, I leave the testimony of the Apostle Paul, for the serious, solemn consideration of all Christians, of all who revere God and love the Lord Jesus Christ, of all who are devout inquirers after sacred truth, of all who prefer divine instruction to the systems of men.

## CHAPTER VII.

SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—SOME PASSAGES FROM ST. JOHN  
CONSIDERED.

ALTHOUGH some may think that enough has been produced, sufficient has been said, upon the subject of the Deity of Christ, yet I feel disposed to examine all the most important passages upon this subject; as it may be useful, and is delightful, to look at the harmony of the Scriptures, which is a strong proof of the truth, that the whole is the word of God, spoken by his different servants or messengers; as the great Jewish temple, though fabricated by thousands of Solomon's workmen, yet was properly his temple. He was the cause and truly the builder thereof.

In 1 John v. 19, 20, we read, "we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness. And we know, that the *Son* of God is come and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, *ev in* (it should be rendered *through*) his son Jesus Christ. This (or he, *ovtos*) is the true God and eternal life." If this translation were correct, when considered by itself alone, it would be some proof of the Deity of Christ; for if *ovtos* this or he, is the relative of Son, or Christ, the last antecedent noun, which is the general rule in grammar,) then this clause would read thus—This, or he, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is the true God, and eternal life,—which would be a direct and plain assertion, that the Son of God is the *supreme* God, for that is the common meaning of true God. Now, supposing John meant to be so understood, and intended that every word should be taken literally, strictly, and grammatically, let us see what difficulties we must encounter. It was John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, who wrote (dictated, or



caused to be written) this passage, which is supposed to declare, that the Son of God is the *true* God; and the same John in his Gospel tells us, that the *Son* of God himself declared in solemn prayer to his Father, that he (the Father) was the *only* true God. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the *only* true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." And Paul says, "there is but one God, the Father"—there is "one God and Father of all, who is above all, and in you all." And the other Apostles and the Prophets often made similar declarations; all which must be false, and all the laws of nature, reason, and common sense (which are the laws of God) must be violated, if this passage, as in our translation, is taken to be strictly true, according to the literal meaning of the words, and the general rule of grammar. What, then; must John be a false witness? By no means. We will clear him from all appearance of inconsistency, contradiction, or clashing with the testimony of the other Apostles, the Prophets, and the Son of God. We will show that he meant no such thing as the advocates for the Deity of Christ contend for, but the reverse,

Although it is a general rule, that the relative refers to the last antecedent noun, yet we find in the best writers many exceptions to the rule. But if there were none, it would seem to be necessary to make one in this case, for otherwise we must make many passages in the Bible false, and change the immutable character of God. And certainly it is better, it is more justifiable, to counteract a single rule of grammar, than to violate the testimony of God, and set aside the laws of nature. But we are not reduced to this necessity. We can find numerous exceptions in point, in the Bible. It will be sufficient here to state one of undisputed authority, even from John himself. In the 7th verse of his second Epistle he says, "For many deceivers are come into the world who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. *This* is a deceiver and an antichrist." According to the grammatical rule, *this* must refer to Christ, which would make *Him*, "who is the faithful and true witness, a deceiver! We would sooner burn all the grammars in the world, than admit such an absurd, monstrous doctrine. Such could not have been John's meaning. But what shall we do? *This* cannot agree with the word *de*

*ceivers*, for that is plural, and *this* is in the singular number. And there is no other antecedent noun in the verse, with which it can agree. If we will attend to what John said in his Gospel, and exercise our reason a little, we shall have no difficulty in finding his meaning. There must be something understood, that is not expressed, to which *this* refers; such as, any person who denies, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, *this*, (or *he*) is a deceiver and an antichrist. So undoubtedly John meant the expression should be understood. And if we consider *this* in the passage under consideration, as referring to "him that is true," it will read consistently with other parts of the Bible; and come properly among the many exceptions to the general rule of grammar; and relieve John from the charge of contradicting himself in his Epistle and Gospel.

But when we come closely to examine the original, we shall find the passage as plain and certain as any problem in Euclid. I will give the whole of the 20th verse, arranged as I think the sense requires; and what I consider a true and nearly literal translation.

Και οίδαμεν, οτι ο υιος του θεου ηκει, και δεδωκεν ημιν διανοιαν, ινα γνωσχωμεν τον αληθινον · και εσμεν εν τω αληθινω, εν τω νω αυτου, Ιησου χριστω. Ουτος εστιν ο αληθινος θεος και η ζωη αιωνιος.

Yet we know that the Son of God came, and gave to us such capacity, that we may obtain knowledge of the true (one) and, through his Son, Jesus Christ, we are in the true (one.) This (or he) is the true God, and eternal life.— Thus we have the plain meaning of John. The true (one,) the proper antecedent of *this*, is put in its proper place, so as to admit of no doubt. I have altered the arrangement of the sentence a little, not to vary the sense at all, but to make it more apparent. The arrangement of parts of a sentence or passage is an arbitrary matter. But it should always be done so as to promote perspicuity, and not produce doubt and uncertainty. This arrangement in different languages is different, so that in translating it is frequently necessary to alter it. I will observe here, that the translation of "him that is true," from τον αληθινον, is not only not literal, but wholly unjustifiable, as it changes the definite article into an uncertain pronoun and a verb. The Latin version. "verum Deum," is

better; but I think the one I have given is most correct. It might however be rendered, the self-existent (Being or God) as *ο αληθινος*; often has that signification. And I conceive that before eternal life there is an ellipsis—something is understood. It should read thus; This (or he) is the true God, and *to know him* is eternal life. This paraphrase is in accordance with Christ's address to his Father; "This is eternal life, that they might know *Thee*, the only true God." But I need not enlarge upon this passage. It is very certain, that there is no proof in it of the Supreme Divinity of Christ—it only shows, that he is the divine Son and Messenger of God the Father.

I will now briefly notice some texts from the 5th Chapter of John. "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son. That all men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father, who sent him." Strange to tell, these texts have been thought, by some, to support the Deity of Christ. But can a declaration, that all judgment and all power, which Christ had, were committed or given to him by the Father, (which not only this passage, but more than a hundred others declare,) I repeat can such declaration prove, that he possessed all originally, underivedly of himself—that *no part* thereof was committed or given to him? Is proof, that a thing was given, proof that it was not given? Is evidence of entire dependence proof of absolute independence? It is too plain for argument. But further—"All men should honor the Son, even as they honor the Father." A little reason, with some reference to other texts, will fully explain this. The honor to the Son here mentioned must refer to the kind or likeness, and not the quantity. Christ says to his disciples in Luke vi. 36; "Be ye therefore merciful, *as* your Father also is merciful." And in Matthew v. 48; "Be ye therefore perfect *even as* your Father which is in heaven is perfect." No one can suppose that Christ meant to require his disciples to be possessed of as much mercy, as the all-merciful Jehovah; or that they should have as much perfection, as the all perfect God; but he must have meant that their mercy and perfection should, in some measure, be as or like his; that they should be general, extensive, and as great, as consistent with their imperfect natures. So men should

give honor to the Son, in the same manner that they do to the Father, for they thereby honor the Father, and otherwise dishonor him. For, "he that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who sent him." If a king's ambassador is honored, the king himself is honored; if the ambassador is disrespected, the king is offended, and thinks himself insulted. The same rule is applicable in all cases of principal and agent; the agent is considered *as*, or in place of the principal. As Christ says, "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me." There can therefore be no difficulty in understanding the meaning of these passages; though they furnish no evidence of the Deity or Omnipotence of Christ.

Some pretend to see proof of the Deity of Christ in the expression or exclamation of Thomas, after he was convinced of the resurrection; "Thomas answered and said, My Lord and my God," Let us take such a view of this expression, as will be consistent with other parts of the Bible, and with the laws of nature and reason. It is acknowledged that the term *Θεός* (God) is used in the Bible and in other books, not only as the name of the Supreme Being, but frequently as an appellative or common name for other beings, or supposed beings. It is applied to heathen false gods, as well as to the Christian's only true God. Now what did Thomas here mean by the term? We ought to look, not only for a possible, but a probable meaning. No doubt, Thomas was at length convinced, that his Lord and Master, with whom he had been familiar for years, and who had been crucified, dead, and buried, was now risen and in his presence. But, if it is *possible*, is it probable, that he believed he was the Supreme ever living God? In order to determine what he *did* believe, we should consider what, just before, he did *not* believe. It is evident, from the context, that it was the resurrection of Christ, and that only, which had been the subject of his unbelief. It seems, Thomas was not present, when Christ first appeared to the disciples. And when the other disciples told him, they had seen the Lord, not that they had seen God, not that the ever living God had risen from the dead and appeared to them; but that their Lord, who had been crucified, had risen, and

they had seen him. But Thomas would not believe them. He probably thought some one had deceived or imposed upon them. For "he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe."—Believe what? that Christ their Lord had risen, not that the ever living God had risen from the tomb. Such an impossibility could not have entered into the mind of Thomas. He could not expect to discover that pure, *spiritual* Being, by looking at the print of the nails in his hands, or thrusting his hand into his side. Such was the *unbelief* of Thomas. And his belief afterwards could not be more extensive than his unbelief had been. For when Jesus by his presence convinced him of his error, he neither did nor said anything to induce him to have a greater or higher object of belief. He said to Thomas, "Behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side, and be not, faithless, but believiug." Surely Christ could not have intended to convince Thomas, that he was that spiritual, invisble Being, "whom no man hath seen, or can see," by showing conclusively, that he was *not* so. Besides all the other disciples and the pious women, as well as Thomas, had been unbelievers of the resurrection, till they were convinced by ocular demonstration; and then it is evident they did not, they could not, believe that their Lord and Master, who had just been raised from the dead, was the ever living God. If such had been the received truth, and was then first revealed, (for we have no evidence that it had been before made known,) must not all the disciples, instead of being familiar with him as a brother, have prostrated themselves before him in solemn awe, and humble adoration, as to the Supreme Majesty of Heaven and Earth? Would not Matthew and Mark, who were present on this occasion, and Luke, who was well informed of all things concerning the subject, have given in their Gospels *some* account of such a wonderful, then revealed, astonishing truth; which, if true, would be the most amazing of all truths? Would John at the close of the same chapter have said, that "These things are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the *Son of God*," if he was God himself? But above all, would not the faithful and true Witness himself, have declared it *plainly*? Was he

ever, or can he ever be a deceiver, either by "commission or omission?" No such belief therefore, I think, could have been held by Thomas or any of the Apostles. No such doctrine can be found any where in the Bible, if correctly interpreted and rightly understood. Thomas undoubtedly seriously *thought* more than he expressed, on this occasion. And if he had given a full expression of his faith, he might have said to his risen Lord and Master, "I sincerely renounce my former unreasonable unbelief, I now fully believe that thou art my Lord, who was crucified, and that thou appearest *as* my God; that thou art the express image of the invisible God, and truly his only Son, the anointed, the commissioned, and glorious Savior of the world!"

The view taken of this subject by the learned Rammo-hun Roy is worthy of special notice. "As to the exclamation," says he, "of Thomas, 'My Lord and my God!' it is neither a confession of the Supreme Deity of Jesus by him, nor is it a vain exclamation, since it is evident from verse 25, that Thomas doubted Christ's resurrection, without any reference to his Deity; and that, when he saw Jesus and the print of the nails, he believed it, and being struck with such a circumstance, he made the exclamation, 'My Lord and my God?' According to the invariable habits of the Jews, Arabs, and almost all other Asiatic nations, who, when struck with wonder, often make exclamations in the name of the Deity; and that Jesus from these apparent circumstances, and having perceived his heart, says, 'Because thou hast seen me thou hast believed,' (verse 29,) by which Jesus acknowledged the belief of Thomas, in the fact which he doubted (in verse 25,) that is, his resurrection; for the subject in question, as it stands in the context, has no allusion to the Deity of Jesus; and the form, in which a confession is made, is totally different from that of exclamation, both in the Scriptures and in ordinary language. I beg my readers will attentively refer to the context, and to the common habits of Asiatics on occasions similar to this, to form their opinions respecting this subject."

I will here notice Matthew i. 23; "Behold a virgin shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is God with us." This is a quotation with a little variation from Isaiah vii. 14, "Behold a [the] virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his

name Immanuel." I can hardly conceive that the prophet meant to apply these words to Christ; because he speaks of the child directly after, in this manner; "Before the child shall know to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings," (Rezin and Pekah;) and because, if it was such prophecy, it has never been fulfilled; Christ has never been called Immanuel. It appears to me that Hezekiah was referred to, who was to be a good king, and a great one, and a temporal deliverer; the son of Ahaz a wicked king, of whom the prophet was speaking. It does not seem probable that the Lord, by his prophet, was speaking to this wicked king, about a spiritual deliverer, who was to come seven hundred years afterwards, when the two kings, Rezin and Pekah, would have been in their graves, for that length of time. And it was common, then and there, for good kings to be called by great and lofty names and titles, such as Immanuel, Lord, Mighty God, &c. And the term, virgin, was often used in a figurative sense, for names of places and things; it should here be rendered *the virgin*. I cannot be satisfied that the passage in Isaiah had original reference to the virgin Mary, or to Christ; but I believe that Matthew used it, as is common, by way of accommodation, as there was a wonderful resemblance, in some respects, between Hezekiah and Christ. I have similar views of the 6th verse of the sixth chapter; "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, [Potentate] the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace." These could not be truly prophesied of Christ, because they have never been fulfilled. Christ has never been called by any of these names. But supposing these passages were meant to refer to Christ, they certainly afford no evidence of his Supreme Divinity, they do not prove that the child, who at a time had not knowledge "to refuse the evil and choose the good," the child that was born, the son that was given, was the Supreme God.—For what is a name? It is one thing to be called God, and another (and may be very different) to be God. Let us notice some Scripture names and titles—Moses was made a god to Pharaoh, and to Aaron; Jacob was called Israel, Prince of God; and the name of Samuel's first born was

Joel, Jehovah God. But does any one suppose that these persons were literally what their names signify? Other names, Malchiel signifies my King God; Gabriel Mighty God, Jaziel, Strong God; Jehiel, living God. But can it be thought, that these persons were, in fact, what their names expressed? Again, Jerusalem is called Jehovah our Righteousness; and the place where Jacob wrestled with the Angel, "called the *face* of God." Now does any one really believe that Jerusalem was Jehovah? Or that the spot of ground where Jacob wrestled, was truly the *face* of the spiritual, invisible God? Once more, Christ himself named James and John, Boanerges, which is sons of thunder. But is this proof that they were really conceived and born by thunder storms? I need not give an answer to these queries; the cases are plain, and require no reply.

But besides the conclusions necessarily resulting from the Bible, let us argue a little analogically; let us look at nature, reason, and common sense, which harmonize with the Scriptures, and which are a divine gift, bestowed on us for direction, for instruction, and for attainment of truth, and not to mislead and bewilder us. How many men are there in America, who have given to their sons the name of Washington? But did that make them Washingtons, or endow them with all the good and great qualities of George Washington? If, two thousand years ago, some of the prophets, or the Almighty himself, by an angel, had foretold that these men should have sons born unto them, and that their names should be called Washington, would that make them all Washington himself? Or could we believe that the Almighty meant to proclaim from heaven what could not be true on earth? We have an *impression* that there never has been but one *real* Washington, in the world, and that probably there never will be another; that his name being given to any person would not make him so. But we *know* that there *is* but one God, and that there never *can* be another; therefore, no name whatever, given to any other being, can prove him to *be* God. Many analogous cases might be suggested, but this is sufficient for a specimen.

Some of the advocates for the Supreme Divinity of Christ have, with great confidence, offered as one of their



proof texts, that of John x. 30; "I and my Father are one." Now we will admit, for the purpose of argument, that Christ here meant to be understood, I and my Father are one God, the only self-existent Supreme Being. The learned Dr. Adam Clark is so confident, that this is the true meaning, that he implies blasphemy against Christ, if it is not true. In his commentary on this passage, he says, "If Jesus Christ is not God, could he have said these words, without being guilty of blasphemy?" Now we cannot for a moment entertain the horrid idea that the dearly beloved, the only begotten, the glorious Son of God, should be directly or indirectly accused of blasphemy. We know that he was without sin, and that it was impossible, that he could commit any crime or fault. So to avoid this monstrous supposed criminality and impossibility, we will admit for the present that the Son is the very God, who is his Father, and whose Son he is; and this is an undeniable impossibility. But we will suppose it, though impossible, that we may see where such kind of construction and argument will carry us. In the xvii<sup>th</sup> of John, the Son thus prayed to his Father; "Holy Father keep, through thine own name, those whom thou hast given me, [that is, my disciples and followers,] that they may be one, as we are." Therefore, the Son prays to his Father that his disciples may be one God, as the Son and Father are, now supposed to be one God. Again, Jesus said in the same prayer; "I pray not for these alone, but for all those which shall believe on me through their word, that they *all* may be one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that they may be one as we are one, I in them and thou in me, that they may be perfect in one." Here Christ extends the prayer to all believers of all times; so that it amounts to this, (if Christ's prayer was granted, which we cannot doubt, as he said, the Father always heard him,) that all who have believed on Christ, and all who shall believe on him to the end of the world, are God or persons in the Godhead. For if they all are one, (as Christ prayed they might be,) as the Son and the Father are one, that is one God, the conclusion is inevitable, that not only Christ's immediate disciples, but all believers of every age of the world are, or will be God or persons of Deity. Hence, it would result that the Christian Religion, according to the

construction of Dr. Clark and others, would furnish vastly more Gods (or persons in the Godhead) than the Hindoo or any other heathen religion. The Hindoos claim above thirty million Gods; but it is to be expected and hoped, that the number of believers in Christ will be not only thirty millions, but thirty times thirty millions, and millions of millions more, even so great a multitude, that no man can number. Such conclusions and results are extravagant and monstrous; but they can be avoided *only* by giving up the ground and argument, from which they necessarily arise. If we will renounce the anti-Bible creed, on this subject, the systems of uninspired men, and go to the only perfect, great Teacher sent from God, for an explanation of the meaning of the oneness between the Son and his Father, and between them and all true believers, we shall find no difficulty; all will be found plain and certain as any axiom in mathematics. From the constant teachings of Christ, while on earth, it clearly appears, that the union between him and the Father was a unity in design and will, in perfect concord, harmony, and love; a union like, though infinitely greater, more pure and holy, than the unity between man and wife, of whom we read, that "they twain shall be one flesh," as it were one being; *meaning* that they should be filled with love for each other, that they should harmonize and be united in all their plans, designs, pursuits, honor, and interests. Such is the kind of unity which, Christ taught, subsisted between him and his Father. It must be such; it cannot be a unity of persons; it cannot mean a numerical unity of being; the holy Scriptures forbid it, and all the laws of nature and nature's God forbid it.

Before I leave this text I feel bound to notice, that such is the original, that it cannot be construed, I and my Father are one *God*, (supplying God, as understood,) because the numeral adjective *εν*, for one, is in the neuter gender. The original reads thus, *Ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ πατὴρ ἐν ἐσμὲν*. And so it is written in all the xviith chapter. It is therefore certain, that John could not have understood Christ's meaning to have been, that he and his Father are one God, or one and the same being; for if he had, he would have written, *εἰς ἐσμὲν* and not *ἐν ἐσμὲν*, putting the adjective, for one, in the masculine gender; so that it would admit, (as understood, though not expressed,) any word signifying God or Being,

and in that case might be consistently construed, I and my Father are one God, or one Supreme Being. But, as it is, (and the reading is not doubted by any one,) it is clear, that the meaning intended by Christ could not have been, a numerical, personal oneness, but that it was a oneness of will, and design, love, harmony, and other properties, of which the Father had given his Son, without measure, from his infinite fulness.

We have noticed most, if not all of the texts much relied on for proof of the Deity of Christ, or that the Son of God is the Supreme, self-existent God; but we cannot find from all or any of them, or any other passage in the Bible, anything like evidence to support such a doctrine, but much to disprove it. Therefore upon every rule and principle of evidence, of reasoning, and of argument, we might stop here and say, the cause is finished, there is no case made out, there is nothing proved, and nothing to be answered. But as this is a great and important question, we will do more than is generally, and according to all rules, required of the party that holds the negative side. We will refer to a few passages from the vast number of the like kind in the Bible, to show more clearly, if possible, that the allegation cannot be true. The only way to prove a negative, as I have before observed, is to substantiate other affirmatives directly contrary and different. As, for instance, you allege that Christ, the Son of God, is very God, the Supreme God and attempt to prove it by inferences. But Christ himself said, and the Bible everywhere says, that there is but one Supreme God; and that *God* the Father is *that* one; so your allegation is disproved, frequently disproved, by the express testimony of the "faithful and true Witness" himself. In John xiv. 28, he says, "My Father is greater than I," therefore the Son could not be supreme. He frequently mentions wherein he was inferior to, and dependent on his Father; he was begotten, or his existence was caused by the Father, and he lived by him, received all his power from him, that he could do nothing without him; therefore he could not be supreme. Again, it is an acknowledged truth, that God is omniscient; but Christ himself says, *he*, the Son is not omniscient; for he says, Mark xiii. 32, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no one, no, not the Angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father."

Therefore he cannot be the Omniscient God, if he is "the faithful and true Witness." Again, Almighty God is able to do and grant everything that is possible ; but the Son of God said, that he could not grant the request of two disciples "to sit the one on his right hand and the other on his left," that it was not his to give or grant, but the Father's right only. He constantly declared that he could do nothing but what he was empowered to do by his Father. No prophet, apostle, or any devout, humble Christian ever expressed more entire dependence upon God the Father, than Christ did. And is it *possible* that any one can so far disregard Christ's testimony, and the whole word of God, as to say that he is the Independent, Almighty God ?

## CHAPTER VIII.

### ON THE MEDIATION OF CHRIST.

It is agreed by all sects of Christians, that Jesus Christ is the only Mediator between God and men. Tim. ii. 5; "For there is *one* God and *one* Mediator between [of] God and men, the man Christ Jesus." Yet there is much controversy in the religious world, concerning this Mediator who and what he is, and how, and in what character he has fulfilled and is fulfilling the mediatorial office. If we were to go to the Bible only for instruction and guidance in this case, I think we should find no foundation for a variety of opinions. We should there find nothing but harmony and consistency; nothing but amazing love, wonderful condescension, and unmerited grace; nothing to perplex and distract the head, but *enough* to warm the heart, to "lift the soul to heaven!" The great source of conflicting opinions, I think, arises from the establishment of, or the attempts to establish, certain human hypotheses, doctrines, or creeds, the truth of which is at least doubtful, and not clearly supported by any revelation. It will not appear strange, that the minds of Christians have been bewildered, when we look at some of the most incredible, unscriptural doctrines, that have been advanced by great, learned, and pious men, from the third century to the present age; such as, that the Son is the eternally begotten Son of God; and infinitely more, and contradictory thereto, that he is the eternal self-existent God himself! And again, in further contradiction, that the *Son* of God never existed (as Son of God) till he was born of the virgin Mary; that his Sonship commenced with his birth on earth; that till that time he was the Omnipotent Jehovah,

and that then, he reduced and humbled himself (his unchangeable Deity) so as to become a material being, in the form of a servant, and in that form was "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross;" and yet that, notwithstanding this immense reduction and humiliation, he still remained the same unchanged and unchangable Jehovah! And to crown the climax of impossibilities, he is made a *double being*; the Supreme God, and a mere man, or in technical language, very God and very man, the Supreme God and a real man. And it is further advanced, that the ever living, supreme, ever blessed God and Creator, suffered, was crucified, dead, and buried! Lest it should be thought that I have not good authority for the existence of such astonishing, shocking, if not blasphemous doctrines, I will quote largely from Bishop Pearson, on the creeds, page 186, &c., who for learning and orthodoxy stands among the highest. His authority, with the Episcopalians, is about equal to St. Paul's, though they differ in so many respects, that either he or Bishop Pearson must be heretical in doctrine. "Having regard to the articles and creeds of the Church," without noticing the Bible, Bishop Pearson says, "Wherefore, by the immediate coherence of the articles, [articles of the Church] and necessary consequence of the creeds, it appears plainly, that the eternal Son of God, God of God, very God of very God [the ever living God] suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried. Now the Son of God we have already showed to be called the only begotten, because he was from all eternity generated of the essence of the Father, and therefore is, as the eternal Son, so also the eternal God." In page 142 the Bishop had said, "it is necessary that we should believe the Son to be that eternal God, whom we are bound to worship, whom *only* we should serve." Then we are not bound to worship and serve the Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of the Universe. Is this the doctrine of the learned Bishop, and of his adherents? It is not so taught in the Bible. Christ uniformly taught *his* disciples to worship the Father and him *only* (in the highest sense) to serve. And he (not like some preachers) "*practised* what he preached." "I thank thee, O Father," he often said; he never thanked the Son or the Holy Spirit.

But further says Bishop Pearson, "That person, who was

begotten of the Father before all worlds, and so was truly the Lord of glory, and *most truly* God, took on him the nature of man, and in that nature, being *still the same* person which he was before, [that is, the blessed God] did suffer and die. When he was buffeted and scourged, there was no other person sensible of those pains, *than* the eternal Word, [God] which before all worlds was *impassible*. When he was crucified and died, there was no other person, which gave up the Ghost, but the Son of him, [that is, that being himself] who alone hath immortality." But the Bishop, in the next page, seems to have got alarmed and startled at what he had just laid down; he throws himself into a thick cloud of mystery, and unsays, in fact, all he had before advanced; and brings out other doctrines, as unscriptural and inconsistent as those he had seemingly relinquished. He adds, "While we prove the person suffering to be God, we may seem to deny the passion of which the perfection of the Godhead is incapable. The divine nature is of infinite and eternal happiness, never to be disturbed by the least degree of infelicity, and therefore subject to no sense of misery. Wherefore, while we profess that the Son of God [the very God] did suffer for us, we must so far explain our assertions, as to *deny* that the divine nature of our Saviour suffered." That the everliving Jehovah suffered and died, all do, and must deny; but that the only begotten Son of God, the anointed Saviour, really (and not by fiction) suffered and died, is as fully revealed and proved by the Bible, as the existence of God himself. But let us look a little further at the Bishop. He goes on to say, "The sufferings of the Messiah were the sufferings of God, the Son, [the ever blessed God] not that they were the sufferings of his Deity, as of which that was incapable, but of his humanity. For though the human nature was conjoined to the divine, yet it suffered as much as if it had been alone, and the Divine as little as if it had not been conjoined." Where then is the amazing, the ineffable love of God displayed, in giving his only Son to suffer and die for sinners, if he did not (and the Omniscient God knew he would not) suffer at all; any more than he would if he had remained in the bosom of his Father? Again, in page 202 of the same work, we read, "And it is certain that our Jesus, Christ whom we worship, was really and truly crucified." Hence it follows,

that the Bishop and those that agree with him, as they hold that the humanity of Christ only suffered, and *that* is to be worshipped, they must worship four Gods—God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost, (which they consider God,) and God the humanity of Christ. This would be going beyond the Articles, as well as the Bible. I will, at present, make no further comments on the writings of this learned Bishop; I may hereafter on some other points. It appears to me, he has disproved the doctrine of the Trinity, beyond a doubt, if we judge him by his own mouth.

Thus I have stated some of the strange, and as I call them, unscriptural doctrines of some uninspired men, which I consider a great cause of the controversies, and various opinions on the subject of the mediation of the Son of God. In these doctrines, we can find no Mediator, such as the Bible points out. We will therefore confine ourselves, in the examination of the subject, to that unerring standard, the Holy Scriptures.

The very term, mediation, of itself seems to give the full character of a mediator. Mediation is an intervening power between two other powers. A mediator, therefore, must be one disinterested, acting between and for both, friendly disposed towards both; he cannot be one of either, as he is disinterested and voluntarily offers his services for the good or honor of both. If two nations have a mediator to adjust any matter of difference between them, the mediator must be another nation, or one of another nation, disinterested and friendly to both; he cannot be one, or of one of the nations between which he mediates. Such I conceive to be the foundation of the true character of our divine mediator. The Greek word for mediator (*μεσιτης*) literally signifies, one in the middle, one who intervenes, &c. Our Mediator, Jesus Christ, may be said to occupy a middle station between God and men; if we may be allowed to imagine a middle place, in infinite space. He is not the supreme God, neither is he merely man; (which I think we have fully proved, from Scripture.) If he were either, he could not be a mediator between them. He cannot be God, because he was the messenger of God, and his glorious agent in this mighty work. He cannot be really man, for he existed before man, or the world, was created; for he was constituted and empowered, by God, to be man's creator, as well as re-



deemer; and therefore could not be man. But I will here observe for the purpose of explanation and a right understanding, that the Son of God has often appeared as God, in the form of God, (in a moral sense,) and likewise he appeared as man, in the likeness of men, and in the form of a servant; yet he is really, and truly, and strictly, neither God nor man. So says the Bible plainly. But, as Jehovah solemnly proclaimed from heaven, he is the beloved *Son* of God, in whom he was well pleased. And although thus highly exalted, yet we may suppose, by the aid of imagination, that he is as far below the infinite, offended Deity, as he is infinitely above man, the offender. It is evident also, that his love to God, his Father, was unbounded, and his love to men was great, amazing, ineffable!—and that he voluntarily offered to undertake the great work of redemption; “Lo I come to do thy will, O God,” is said of him in the prophecy. Therefore it seems, he was exactly fitted and qualified to be the only mediator of God and men. And herein is not only the love, but also the perfect wisdom of God, gloriously displayed, in his providing and appointing *such* a mediator in *such* a case!

*Such* was the mediation, *such* was the mediator, the redeemer, who is clearly revealed to us in the holy Scriptures—he is not only the *one* mediator, but he is the only sufficient, suitable one, that there ever was, or ever can be; for God the Father never had, and never can have, but one only begotten, dearly beloved Son. The Bible fully informs us, that it was *this* Mediator, this only Son of God, who came down from heaven to our world—tabernacled in the flesh, dwelt in “a body prepared for him,” was treated with indignity and reproach, scourged and buffeted, suffered, and died on the cross, that sinful men might live forever! This was all real; it was no theatrical representation; it was in no *part* a fiction; it was he wholly, in all his attributes, in his whole person, in his whole nature, or natures, (if it is possible for him, or any being, to have more than one nature,) it was our Mediator, the only begotten Son of God, who was crucified! If you doubt it, go back in imagination, to Mount Calvary, to the time of the crucifixion, and behold the scene, hear the evidence. Behold the sun is darkened,—and there was darkness over *all* the *earth* from the sixth to the ninth hour,—see the veil of the temple rent

in twain from the top to the bottom,—the graves opened, the earth quakes—hear the rending rocks, and all nature echo the trembling exclamation of the Centurion, “Truly, this was the Son of God!” Hear and behold all these things, and then tell me, ye who have souls to save, or hearts to feel, or powers to reason, tell me, could *this* sufferer be less than the only begotten Son of God? That he is not more or greater, is certain, because there is no being greater or above him, except the Supreme ever living Being, who never could, who cannot die, or for a moment cease to exist. Thus then we fix and establish, we think, the true scriptural character of the “one Mediator of God and men;” for the support of which, reference may be had to numerous texts quoted in the second chapter of this work. In view of such a character may we all, with grateful, heartfelt ejaculation, unite with ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of Angels, in saying, “Worthy is the Lamb, that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing!”

We will now further consider briefly some of the doctrines advanced upon this subject, which appear to us to be unscriptural and incredible. All those, who hold to the Supreme Deity of Christ, or who believe that the Son of God was both God and man, very God and very man, perfect God and perfect man, and all who profess to believe the literally impossible doctrine of trinity in unity, have asserted, as plainly as language can express, that the almighty, the eternal, the ever living, unchangable God, not two thousand years ago, was born of the virgin Mary, became man, suffered on earth, was crucified, dead, and buried, and remained under the power of death three days; and that *he* was the mediator between God (himself) and men! Such ideas are too shocking, too horror-chilling to be discussed, or even mentioned. Yet they are expressly or implicitly advanced, in most of the Orthodox writings, so called, from Athanasius down to this day. I might quote of this nature enough to fill volumes; but it is not necessary, as such doctrine cannot be strictly believed; and it is even denied by most of the writers themselves, and their followers, that they meant literally, what they have unwarrantably asserted. But they have laid down other positions, nearly as unscrip-

tural and apparently impossible to be true, as those they have seemingly abandoned. They state that the Son was truly God, the Supreme God, and truly man; two distinct natures, united in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ; and they all say, and the Bible declares, that it was Christ that died. Now it is not contended that there was more than one Christ, or that Christ was more than one person; therefore if the one Christ, the one person, who comprehended both natures, both God and man died, does it not necessarily follow that God, as well as man suffered and died? This conclusion is irresistible; it cannot be otherwise. If the two natures were so united, as never to be divided, they could not be divided, even by death—the king of terrors could not divide them. If one nature suffered, both must; and therefore the ever living God could not be one of those two natures, (if there were two,) or any part thereof, either as second person, or by any name whatever.

But it is said that Christ, the Son of God, who (it is said) is God and man, died *as man*; and the words of Peter are cited in proof, “Christ died for us in the flesh.” No doubt, Peter meant what he said; and “*more* was meant than meets the ear.” We fully believe the saying. But he did not say, and he could not have meant, that the everlasting God died in the flesh. Neither did he say that Christ, or the Son of God died in the bosom of his Father, or when he was the glorious agent of the Father in the creation of the world, or when on Mount Sinai, in the midst of the thunders and lightnings, he (probably) was delivering the law to Moses. Nor did Peter mean to be understood, that Christ died, at any time, in any form or appearance, before his advent into our world. But he meant, literally what he said; that Christ, the Son of God, the same person to whom he replied, when asked, whom say ye that I am? “Thou art the Son of God.” This glorious person, really, not by fiction, or in part, but truly, “died in the flesh,” in the “body prepared for him” by the Father; and not in that form or appearance of God, of which he had by the power of him, for a time, divested himself. And shall we be “slow to believe *all*, that” Peter and the rest of the Apostles, (who agree with him,) and Christ himself have taught? *More* we are not required to believe, though some seem de-

terminated to believe much more ; as if they had further or fuller revelation, or were influenced by some mysterious, unaccountable infatuation. And again it is said, that, in the sufferings and death of Christ, his *divine* nature did not suffer at all, more than it would if it had not been conjoined to his human, [see Bishop Pearson and others,] that it was his humanity only, that suffered. But Peter did not say so, (none of the Apostles have said so,) he did not say that the *humanity* of Christ died in the flesh, that the "body prepared for him," and which he occupied, suffered, and was crucified, while he, the occupant, was perfectly happy, and as free from pain or distress, as he was when in the bosom of his Father. No such thoughts were ever suggested by any of the Apostles. But they have represented that Christ suffered, with great agony, and was crucified in his state of humiliation, even as a malefactor, and not in that glorious form, or appearance, which he had with the Father before the world was.

But the most inconsistent and unscriptural thing that is taught on this subject, by orthodox men, as they are called, is what they call the covenant of redemption ; in which the Almighty, in three persons or characters, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, is represented to make a covenant, that he, as Father and first person, would send himself, as God the Son, the second person, into the world, to be born of a virgin, to suffer, to be crucified, and die, for the salvation of lost men ; because no other being was sufficient for this great work, and man could not otherwise be saved ; and that he, God the Father, would appoint, and empower, and qualify the messenger, God the Son, to do and perform the necessary work of the mission. And God, as the Son and second person, covenants, that he will freely, and of his own choice, (although he is sent,) offer to undertake and perform the work according to the will of God the Father ; that he will be obedient in all things, even "unto the death of the cross." (The office and work of God the Holy Ghost, the third person, I leave for consideration hereafter.) Is there anything in the Bible to warrant such an inconsistent, and as relates to truth, impossible hypothesis ? It is difficult to discuss such a question, without using terms that may seem irreverent. But, if I use any expressions, which may appear to be irreverent, I do not mean to apply

them to anything contained in the Holy Scriptures, nor to any of the perfections or attributes of Deity; but only to the monstrous *absurdities* of uninspired men, which I have a right, and may feel it my duty, occasionally, to attack with severity; though I shall never mean to treat with disrespect, any of the authors of what I may esteem erroneous or unscriptural doctrines. I verily believe, that most, if not all of them, were learned, zealous, pious Christians, and that they verily thought they were doing God service. But they were men, imperfect, uninspired men; and they were so circumstanced, that it was hardly possible for them, being but men, to entertain any other views, than what they have expressed; as I shall attempt to show, when I consider the causes of the existence of some incredible doctrines. But to return to the supposed covenant.—Was any such covenant ever literally fulfilled? Did God the Father ever send God the Son into the world; and was God ever born of a virgin? That Jesus Christ, the *Son* of God, was born of the virgin Mary, is fully proved by the Bible. But he was the Son of God, not God the Son. That he was really the Supreme, is disproved, by the voice (of God) from heaven, at his baptism, and at his transfiguration on the Mount, saying, “This is my beloved *Son*, in whom I am well pleased,”—thereby declaring that he was not God, as he could not be, if he was his *Son*. And Christ and his Apostles uniformly taught the same. The voice from heaven did not proclaim, this is my, or the beloved God the Son, the second person of the Deity, but directly the contrary. And is it possible that a voice from heaven could make or give a false representation, a false character to *God*, or to the *Son* of God? And could the Son and his Apostles continue to teach such falsehood, so long as they lived upon earth? And did God the Son, or the second person in the Godhead, or any part of the Supreme God, ever suffer and die upon the cross? Though there are many, who by their creeds, litanies, catechisms, and church confessions or articles pretend to hold this fact; yet I believe there are few, if any, who now believe practically and truly such an incredible doctrine. How then has this part of the supposed covenant been fulfilled? Why, here comes the mystery, or rather the fiction. The Orthodox say, that God the Son,

the second person of Deity, was not only God, but also man; that God and the man were indissolubly united in one person, whereof is one Christ; and that the man, or the humanity so united to God, suffered and died; and therefore it may be said, that God the Son who was both God and man, died. We are most affectingly told, in the Bible, of the great merits of the death of Christ. But this death, thus described, seems to merit only the name of death by proxy, or a mere human death; for they say that the Divinity, or all that was not human, did not suffer at all, did not die. And is this a true representation of the amazing love of God, in sending his Son, (who is God,) to die for men, when he did *not* die; and God knew that he, the ever living God, *could not* die? If there is any such thing as fiction; if there can be a representation of anything, that is not *real*, this must be theatrical on a great scale. It must be an awful fictitious representation (for effect only) of an event, which could not possibly happen; for the Almighty, the ever living God, cannot cause his own death, in whole or in part, in one person or in all his persons, if he can have more persons than one. I cannot therefore believe in such a kind of covenant or agreement. But I can conceive of one, which I think is credible, if it is not *clearly* proved in the Bible. I can imagine, and have a faith, that the Almighty God the Father, out of great and astonishing love to mankind, might propose, might say to his only beloved Son, I have great compassion towards lost offending men; their crimes are great, they have offended against my holy laws, and righteous government; yet I would, of my great mercy and benevolence, forgive and receive them into favor. But I cannot consistently pardon and forgive them, until they repent, reform, and ask the remission of their sins. And I know they will not, unless I adopt some extraordinary measures towards them, to convince and convert them from the error of their ways; for I have been kind and merciful to them, I have counselled and warned them by my prophets; but they would not hear; they would not obey my voice, that they might live. I have now devised a plan, which must be effectual to their recovery. I will send thee, my beloved Son, to be the only Mediator between them and me; thou shalt go into their world.

I will permit thee to leave my bosom, to lay aside, for a time, thy divine dignity and honors, to divest thyself of thy celestial form, and that glorious appearance like unto me, which thou now hast, that thou mayest appear like unto them. And thou shalt consent to be born of a virgin and to be made in the likeness of men, and even of a servant, to dwell among them, in a body that I will prepare for thee, to teach and instruct them ; to reveal clearly, my perfect character, my love, mercy, and long-suffering towards sinners, their transgressions, and disobedience, and my willingness to forgive them upon their repentance and faith in thee. But though thou shalt have the appearance of a man, yet I will open the heavens, and come down in a cloud, and proclaim thee as "my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And further, to convince all, that thou art my Son and Messenger, I will give thee power to perform publicly great and wonderful works—to heal the sick, to give sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, to raise the dead, to forgive sins, and to cast out devils. I will give thee all power in heaven and earth, that shall be necessary in this great undertaking. I will constitute thee the only Mediator and Advocate of sinners. I will give thee extraordinary capacity, (such as no other being ever had or can have,) to teach, convince, instruct, and persuade them to repent and be reconciled to their heavenly Father ; so that they may receive forgiveness of their sins, and life everlasting. But to make thy mission more effectual and convincing, and to show and display fully my amazing love and mercy, thy great kindness and condescension, and to establish with irresistible proof thy true character, as my only Son, and their only Mediator and Advocate, thou must submit to suffer unjustly, to be crucified most cruelly, and to die most innocently ; and on the third day, I will raise thee from the tomb, display thee again to them, exalt thee again at my own right hand, and make thee the final Judge of the whole world ! Then must sinners repent and believe, and I will receive them into my presence, to dwell forever with thee in glory ! And what saith the Son, (may we suppose,) that only beloved Son, who always pleased his Father, who sought not his own will, who had *no* will of his own, but to *do* the *will* of his Father ? Methinks I hear him with rapture reply ; Lo, I come to do thy

will, O God; I am ready, and willing, and anxious to do and to suffer, whatever to thee, Holy Father, seemeth good! —Here is love ineffable! Here is a Mediator indeed provided, one mighty to save, one who must melt a heart of stone into grateful love and admiration!



## CHAPTER IX.

### ON THE GREAT AND IMPORTANT OBJECT OF THE MEDIATION.

THE great object of the mediation was, undoubtedly, to make, cause, or produce reconciliation, or atonement, as it is most generally called by theological writers, though improperly; for the term is not used but once in the New Testament, [Rom. v. 11.] and then and there it should be rendered reconciliation, which is the true meaning of *καταλλαγην*. Hence arises the great question, what are we to understand by reconciliation as used in the Bible? Does it mean a reconciliation of God to men, or men to God? The former is understood and held by most of the Christian world, by the Church of England, the Presbyterian Churches, and most of those, who are called Orthodox. I will therefore consider *that* first. In the 2d and 31st of the Articles of Religion of the English Church, it is laid down that, "Christ, very God and very man, truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us. The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual." And in the Westminster Confession, we read that, "The Lord Jesus, by his perfect obedience, and sacrifice of himself, hath *fully* satisfied the justice of his Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom the Father hath given him."

In support of these creeds and confessions, it is argued, that God was justly angry with men; but that his anger was appeased, by the death and sufferings of Christ; that Christ suffered the penalty of all the sins of the whole world; and

that he has purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, for all those whom God has given him; that his righteousness is imputed to us, (placed to our account,) and our iniquity to him; that his righteousness is the ground of our acceptance with God, without any regard to what we have done or can do. It is said, that God is infinitely just, and his infinite justice requires a full penalty for every sin, before it can be forgiven. Again, it is argued, that an infinite sacrifice was necessary, for the honor of God's law; that forgiveness without would weaken its authority. It is stated, that every sin is an infinite evil, because it is committed against an infinite Being; and therefore requires an infinite satisfaction; that Christ was the only person, who could make this satisfaction, because he is God and man in one person. Again, it is said, that God *could* not, and *would* not, pardon men, when they had repented and reformed, without inflicting their proper penalty and punishment, on a substitute or third person. ("Horribile dictu!") It is further stated, that Christ gave himself a ransom for sinners.—Let us examine these doctrines and arguments, and see whether they are consistent with the word of God, his perfect character and attributes, his laws of nature, his light of reason, and his dictates of common sense; ("for all things are of God.")—Whenever or wherever reconciliation is necessary, there must be some offence committed, some wrong done by the party, or person to be reconciled; or there must be some fault, or unjust, unfriendly, improper feeling in the will or disposition of such party, which, by the aid of a mediator, may be removed, and a satisfactory change and reformation be produced. A reconciliation cannot be obtained without some change or alteration, any more than there can be an effect without a cause. It therefore seems that the perfect, unchangeable God cannot be a subject for reconciliation. He is supremely holy, merciful, ready and willing to forgive; there is nothing in him that can, in any respect, need to be reconciled; but the whole world should be reconciled to him. *That* is the "one thing needful." They say, God was justly angry with men for their disobedience and ingratitude; but it is said, his anger was appeased; and how? By their repentance and reformation, love and gratitude? No; but by their doing a deed, committing an act,

ten thousand times more heinous and provoking, than all they had done before, by their crucifying his only beloved Son, his ambassador of peace and reconciliation. Is this the way to appease the just anger of a holy and righteous God, without one spark of repentance, without one movement of reformation? I have not so learned the Bible; reason and nature would calculate, that the anger would be thereby increased, instead of being appeased; that it would be changed into *vengeance*. But it is said, that Christ has suffered the penalty of all the sins of the whole world, and purchased for men not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, &c. Then there is nothing for God to pardon, or remit. If a penalty is suffered, it cannot be remitted; if a punishment is inflicted, it cannot be dispensed with; if a debt is paid or discharged, it cannot be forgiven or released; no matter by whom all has been done, if a deed has been done, for any one, by a friend or a foe, it is as effectual as if done by the party in interest. And if Christ has purchased for men reconciliation, and an inheritance in heaven, then they might claim, demand, and possess them as their right, without any payment, without any repentance, any reformation, without even one emotion of gratitude! This would be giving to sinners a vested right of demand on the Almighty. If an estate is purchased for me, by any one, I have a right to demand the possession and enjoyment of it, as much as if I had purchased and paid for it myself. Upon this view, there would be nothing for God or men to do in the premises. Men would not have to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, to repent and reform, for the penalty is suffered for them, the debt is paid, and the inheritance is purchased. Man's title would be complete, and he would have nothing to do, but to demand possession; and there would be no ground left, for the exercise of the forgiving spirit of God, for the display of his compassion for lost sinners; for there would be nothing to forgive, no penalty to remit, no debt to be released, and no inheritance to be granted, as it had been already purchased and sealed. All is settled, without any requirement of the sinner, to repent and reform, without any need of the mercy and forgiveness of God. I cannot adopt such reasoning; I cannot find such doctrine in the Bible

Again it is said, the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, and *that* (and not repentance and reformation) is the ground of our acceptance with God; and our guilt is imputed to Christ, the whole weight laid upon him. Why, then, was it necessary for Christ to preach repentance, and reformation, and love to God, and faith in his Son, as necessary to salvation? If he had purchased it for us, whether we repent or not, why did he not preach in accordance with the doctrines, we are considering, and say to his disciples, and all who heard him; My righteousness is all imputed, transferred to you; it is alone abundantly sufficient for your salvation; and your guilt is all imputed to me; I have taken the whole load from you; I have all your sins, and you have all my righteousness. I came from heaven, from my Father; he sent me, not to teach and instruct you, and urge you to repent and be converted; but to suffer for you the penalty annexed to your trespasses, to make satisfaction to God for you, to pay your whole debt, to set you free, to take away death from you, and give you life; to purchase for you not only reconciliation with God, but also an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, even without your repentance or amendment. For if all your guilt is laid upon me, and all my righteousness is imputed (or transferred to you, surely you can need no repentance; and if I suffer your penalty and satisfy all your debts, which I am to do, you will have nothing to be forgiven. But you will be astonished, when I tell you that all this, and more will be done for you, by my sufferings, crucifixion, death, and burial, which the Father, with infinite delight, will receive as full and infinite satisfaction!—Shocking as these ideas are, they are, I think, more in unison with the doctrine we have under consideration, than with the true, pure, holy, supplicating, persuasive preaching of Jesus, as recorded in the Gospels. I have always been led to believe that sin (as well as righteousness) is a personal act, unalienable; that it cannot be transferred, especially, to an innocent person; that it cannot be removed or destroyed, but by repentance, amendment, and forgiveness, and the bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. What sort of a plea would it be for a sinner, when called to account before the final Judge, if he were to allege, and say; I have no sin, my sins have all been imputed and transferred to Christ. I

ought not now to be punished for sins, which were long since removed from me, Christ's righteousness being substituted in place thereof. Think you, the righteous Judge of all the earth would receive such a plea, in justification of actual personal transgression? And should the sinner further set up a claim for an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven, which he alleges Christ purchased for him, and which is his of right, would such a claim be admitted? Surely not. For *no* repentance, *no* reformation, *no* forgiveness would be complete bars to it, if tried by the laws of God or reason.

Again it is said, God is infinitely just, and his infinite justice requires a full penalty for every sin, before it can be pardoned. But if the penalty required is satisfied or suffered, there will be nothing to be forgiven; a just God cannot require a double satisfaction or penalty. If a debt is paid or satisfied it cannot afterwards be forgiven or released, or again demanded; there could be no debt in existence; and it would be impossible for God to forgive or release one that does not exist.

It is further stated, that an infinite sacrifice was necessary for the honor of God's law; forgiveness without would weaken its authority. If this is not a mere verbosity, intended to be believed only because it is mysterious, incredible, and contradictory; if it has any *real* meaning, it must mean an impossibility. Infinite sacrifice must be the sacrifice, or death of an infinite Being; and as there is but one infinite Being, and that one is ever living and incapable of suffering, or dying, or being sacrificed, it was therefore impossible that such a sacrifice, as is said to be necessary, could be made. So there was a necessity without a possibility. But if it *had* been possible, how could the law be thus honored? Can a law be honored by the sacrifice or crucifixion of the lawgiver, and the supreme executor of the law? Strange honor! Again, could the authority of the law be weakened by the exercise of the mercy, love, and forgiveness of God, some of his most distinguishing attributes, against whose power, authority, and influence, *no being* in the universe could think of rebelling, except Devils, who are not subjects of mercy or forgiveness?

Again, it is argued that sin is an infinite evil, because it is committed against an infinite Being, and requires an in-

finite satisfaction—that Christ was the only person who could make this satisfaction, because he is God and man in one person. If it is a good argument, that sin is an infinite evil, because it is committed against an infinite Being, the same argument will show that a satisfaction offered by any man, or any finite creature, to the infinite Being, would be an infinite satisfaction. The same argument will also show, that every Christian's love to God is an infinite good, because it is bestowed on an infinite Being, and would require an infinite reward. But I perceive a further difficulty ahead. There are different gradations in sin and evil deeds, and also in love and righteousness. If every sin, if the smallest sin, is an infinite evil, what must the greatest be? Are there degrees in infinity, such as positive, comparative, and superlative? Speaking an evil word against a brother is a sin committed against the infinite Being, because it is a violation of his law; call it an infinite evil, if you please. But all will acknowledge, that blaspheming the name of the Great Jehovah is a thousand times, yea millions of times, more wicked, than a word spoken against a human brother; yet we have no worse, no more aggravated name to give it; it cannot be millions of times infinite sin. Nor can the blasphemer be punished millions of times more than infinitely—he can be punished no more than the reviler of his brother. The smallest sinners and the greatest are under like condemnation, and require the same infinite satisfaction. The same principles will apply to virtue and holiness, to good and praiseworthy deeds, of all gradations. Where then is the Bible doctrine of rewards and punishments, according as every one shall deserve? It is nullified by human systems. But it is said, Christ was the only person who could make this satisfaction, this infinite satisfaction, because he is God and man, in one person. Now we have already shown, that Christ, if he is God and man, could not make such a satisfaction; but we will presently explain what kind of satisfaction, and in what manner, he, as the Son of God and Mediator, could and did make, so as to be satisfactory to the Father, and available to men; because, as God, he could not die, he could not suffer at all, he could not be crucified, as all agree, though not always in words. And so, if his humanity only died, or was sacrificed, it was no more than a human sacrifice. It could not

be an infinite one. Indeed, God the Father Almighty, or the whole Deity, (if there can be such a thing as persons or parts of Deity,) could not make such a satisfaction, for he is unchangeable, ever living, incapable of suffering, or being sacrificed; he cannot cause himself pain or make his own perfect, happy existence cease for a moment. We *must* therefore conclude, that the sacrifice, or atonement for sin, which is taught in the Bible, is not an infinite sacrifice or sacrifice of an infinite being; it cannot be the offering up of *very* God upon the cross. We must come to this conclusion; or we must adopt a fictitious death, suffering, and satisfaction, and make a kind of theatrical representation of the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ.

Again it is said, though the Bible does not say it, though the Son of God never said it, though the Prophets never said it, though the Apostles never said it, though Jehovah never proclaimed it in a cloud, with a voice from heaven, though nature, reason, and common sense stand astonished at the saying, and the perfect character of the Almighty contradicts it; yet by *men*, men who have seen the great goodness and mercy of God in his works, and in his providence, who acknowledge that their eternal salvation depends on his forgiveness, by such men it is said, (*et horrible dictu!*) that God *could* not, and *would* not pardon men, when they *had* repented and reformed, without inflicting their proper penalty and punishment on a substitute or third person! *What* can this be *less* than defamation or blasphemy against the merciful, forgiving God? But let us notice what *is* said in the Bible; what Jehovah himself has solemnly proclaimed upon this subject, by his prophets and otherwise. "Let the wicked forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and *he* will have mercy upon him, and unto our God, for *he* will abundantly *pardon*." Here it is not required that full penalty and punishment should first be inflicted upon a substitute or third person; but only that the wicked and unrighteous man should return to the Lord with repentance and amendment; and upon that condition receive pardon. Again Nehemiah said, "Thou art a God, ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness." Again, by another prophet; "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, a forgiving God." The

Old Testament is full of such merciful expressions; and they abound also in the New. Our Saviour has given us many beautiful, glowing illustrations, of the soul-reviving doctrine of forgiveness. He has not given it a cold unfeeling representation; he has not imprisoned it in the gloomy cells of mystery, and dogmatic darkness he has not surrounded it with penalties, punishments, and moral impossibilities; but he has mildly displayed it, in vivid colors, upon the lofty, holy hill of Zion.—“Forgive and ye shall be forgiven.—If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; if he repent, *forgive* him.—If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will *forgive* you.—If thy brother sin against thee, and turn again, and say I *repent*, thou shalt forgive him, even until seventy times seven.—And when they had nothing to pay he frankly forgave them both.” In all these cases, there is nothing said, no hint given of any penalty or punishment to be inflicted or paid previously; there is no condition precedent whatever, but repentance and a return to duty. I might quote a great number of texts of the like nature, but it is unnecessary. I will further notice only the deeply interesting parable of the Prodigal Son. In this parable, Christ undoubtedly meant, among other things to represent the great goodness of God, and his readiness and willingness to pardon the vilest sinners, upon their repentance, reformation, and returning to him, in a suitable manner; without any other condition precedent; and also to show the unreasonableness, and the great and inexcusable wickedness and ingratitude of sinners, until they repent, reform, and come to God, with full acknowledgment of all their sins and unworthiness. And when they are commencing this course, though they are yet a great way off, their heavenly Father, the kind Parent of the universe will see them, will have compassion on them, and (to use figurative language) will run to meet them, will fall upon their necks, will embrace them in the arms of his love, and freely forgive them. He will not turn and shut himself up from them; he will not close the doors of his mercy with the iron bars of justice. He will not say to them, in orthodox style, “I *cannot*, and I *will* not pardon you, (though I know you have repented, reformed, and acknowledged your sins and unworthiness,) until I have inflicted the proper penalty and punishment of sin on you, or on a substitute or third person. Is there any



such sentiment contained in the parable? Let us look at it. It is evident, this son was originally of a wrong, bad disposition; that he was very foolish, wicked, and most ungrateful son of a good and bountiful father. After his father had kindly bestowed on him one half of all his goods, he, in a most unfeeling manner, left him; "he gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living." He departed into a far country, where he could not be under the commands, counsels, warnings, and constant protection and advice of his father. Here we have a *just* representation of sinners, in the commencement of their course of iniquity. After receiving innumerable favors, they depart from God as far as possible; they do not wish to be near, to hold communion with him; they do not wish to be under his immediate commands, to be controlled by his counsels and warnings, or to be influenced by his Holy Spirit; "they desire not the knowledge of God.—He is not in all their thoughts," while prosperity attends their wickedness, and their depraved companions support them. The prodigal son thought not of his kind father, while his money lasted, and while his abandoned associates stood by him. But when he had spent all, when he began to be in want, and was like to perish with hunger; then he came to himself; that is, he came to be, in some measure, what he should be, penitent, sensible of his guilt and unworthiness, and of the goodness and mercy of his father, his willingness and ability to supply all his wants. While he meditated on the fulness of his father's house, he was also deeply impressed with a view of his own miserable condition; he saw that, without the compassion and aid of his father, he must perish. These circumstances brought him to a preparatory state of repentance; he was disposed to return to his father, to throw himself upon his mercy; he did sincerely repent; he arose and went to his father and said to him, "Father I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."—I have despised thy parental goodness; and now I must perish, unless thou have compassion on me. I am willing to do any menial service for thee, if thou wilt forgive me, and receive me into favor, as a servant only.—Is not this a just description of long offending, but at length repenting, sinner? The para-

ble was given by him, who "spoke as never man spake"—*who* will attempt to improve or alter it? But let us look at the character, which Christ has expressly or implicitly given of the father of the prodigal. We will presume, that the father had knowledge, how his son had conducted, how he had wasted his substance, and in what manner; how he disgraced and degraded himself, in all manner of vice and infamy, and was in great distress both of body and mind. And we will also suppose, that he had learned with great joy and delight, that his son had at length repented, was about to return, to confess his sins, to acknowledge his unworthiness, and to entreat for pardon. Now see this repenting sinner on his return; nay, rather look on his forgiving, compassionate father—it is a heavenly picture!—hear him, view him in all his conduct toward his penitent son. "Lo, when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell upon his neck, and kissed him." And after the son had confessed to his father all his guilt and unworthiness, "the father saith to his servants, bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his finger, (special token of love,) and shoes on his feet; and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and they began to feast and to be joyful." Is there anything in this parable like the language we have been considering, *could not* pardon, and *would not* pardon, without a penalty and punishment inflicted upon a substitute or third person? Is there anything like it anywhere in the Bible? If such strange doctrine had been true, would not the father, when he saw his son yet a great way off, have been represented as closing his doors against him, and sending his servants to say to him, "though I know that you have repented, and are in heart reformed, yet I *cannot* and *will not* pardon and receive you, without a penalty and punishment, paid or suffered by some one?" Could it have been consistent, even with justice, laying aside all love and mercy, for the father to have sent a message to his son, that he could not pardon him, penitent as he was, without inflicting the proper, due penalty on his mother or brother?—Let us not plunge into the gloomy abyss of unexplored mystery to bring up some stern, flaming, sort of justice, to dry up the infinite fountain of divine love. There is enough in the teachings of Jesus, there is enough plainly taught in the Bible, to convince

all, that God is ever ready and willing to forgive even the vilest of sinners, upon their repentance and reformation, reformation in heart, and bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. After such repentance, there is no hinderance, with God, in the bestowing of pardon and salvation. Repentance and forgiveness are near relatives—they walk arm in arm throughout the Bible; and O, that their blessed influence might fill and warm every heart! But I do not mean to give the sinner any merit, or credit even for his own repentance or reformation—it is all effected by the power and influence of God, and the instrumentality of Christ, the only Mediator: as we shall show, and the manner how.

I will now attempt to show by the Bible, what I think will be an easy task, that the great object of Christ's mediation was the reconciliation of man to God; and not of God to man. This doctrine was constantly taught by Christ; and Paul lays it down clearly, in 2 Cor. v. 18-20, (and in other places,) "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by [or through] Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." It may here be observed that neither Christ nor his Apostles ever prayed to the Father, or requested that he would become reconciled to men, to sinners, that his anger might be appeased, that his wrath might be pacified and turned away from them, or that he might in any way be altered or changed, in his spirit and disposition towards them, that he might become more merciful or forgiving; because they knew the Almighty could not be changed, even in his will or disposition; besides, if it *were* possible that he might be changed, by entreaty or otherwise, a change could not *possibly* be made for the better, for anything more favorable to sinners, for he is an all-merciful God, full of compassion, and ready and willing to forgive to the uttermost. He would not that any should perish. Now, if the object of the mediation had been, as some suppose, to reconcile God to man, would not Christ have been constantly employed

in most devout supplication to the Father, to become reconciled to sinful men, to appease his anger, and not to let his wrath burn against them to be more merciful and forgiving, to repent himself, and not rely on the repentance of sinners; (unscriptural reconciliation indeed!) and thus to effect a reconciliation between God and man. Besides; if the object was to reconcile God to man, why was it necessary that Christ, the Mediator, should come, or be sent to this world at all? Could he not in the bosom of the Father, being in the form of God, and in his immediate presence and employment, do as much to effect *such* a reconciliation, as he could placed upon this gloomy earth, and dwelling in a human body, surrounded by all the evils and temptations of a wicked world? If God alone was to be reconciled, why need an ambassador, so exalted an ambassador, be sent to men? If God must be propitiated or reconciled to men, it would seem to be unnecessary to reconcile men to God; it would, at least be of secondary importance. I can find no such doctrine in the Bible.

The works done, and the characters sustained by Christ, in his mediatorial office, were various; but they all composed one great plan, had the same object in view; they were progressive in their importance, effect, interest, greatness, and wonder. We may take a rising view, and consider Christ's plain, simple, yet powerful preaching, his perfect and holy life, his miracles, and all his wonderful works, his most excruciating sufferings, his innocent life, and most agonizing death, his glorious resurrection, and his triumphant ascension into heaven, all constituting a great and glorious plan of infinite love and wisdom, to make the reconciliation of the whole world to God sure and effectual, to remove the cause and evil of sin, so that its place may be supplied by the forgiveness of God, and men be saved, "to the glory of God, the Father."

All the works, the whole character of Christ, and all that pertained to him, were necessary to produce the reconciliation of the whole world to God. A part might have effected the object partially. By the preaching, holy life, and miracles only of Christ, his disciples and many others, in his life time, were convinced, converted, made to repent and to reform, to be reconciled to God, to believe that Christ was an ambassador sent from God, and that all he

taught was true. The disciples therefore were not reconciled to God by the death of Christ, for they were reconciled before it, by his teaching and his miracles; these were sufficient for them. But *they* were not the whole world, and the whole world could not have the immediate convincing presence of the Mediator himself, as they had. The Omniscient undoubtedly foresaw, that Christ's preaching might not long be remembered, that his miracles might be forgotten, and his common sufferings obliterated by time. It was therefore necessary that there should be something more forcible, more durable, more irresistible. Hence are brought to view the crucifixion and death, the resurrection and ascension of the Son of God! Events so extraordinary, so passing all wonder and astonishment, that they can never be forgotten. Neither time nor eternity can obliterate them from the records of heaven and earth. They must convince, convert, reform, and reconcile the whole world to God.

In considering any subject we are apt to take a part for the whole; to view one prominent point as the only thing of consequence; when upon careful examination it will be found, that other things are of equal importance. The death of Christ is often taken and considered, as the whole work of the mediation and reconciliation; whereas, by itself alone, taken into view without regard to its special influence and connexions, it would be unmeaning and ineffectual for the object. Had it taken place before his baptism, before his entrance upon his ministry, before he began to preach repentance and reformation, with the forgiving character of God, before he wrought miracles, before his spotless and perfectly holy life was known, it would not have given us a display of the greatness, wisdom, love, and mercy of God, and the amazing condescension and kindness of his Son, in undertaking the work of redemption. It would not have revealed to sinners the great enormity of their transgressions, disobedience, and unbelief, nor the necessity of repentance and reformation to secure their salvation, forgiveness, and acceptance with God. All these would have been prevented, and the whole plan of the mediation defeated by his premature death. I would by no means be thought to undervalue the merits of Christ's death, which, if rightly considered in its proper connexion and natural relation, was of inestimable, unspeakable, infinite worth; all-

important, considering man's proneness to unbelief, and indispensably necessary towards the success of the mission. It was like the king's great seal to a treaty, which of itself is of no consequence, only as it is conclusive, and undeniable proof, that what had been done was according to his direction, agreeable to his will, and should be sacredly observed. So the Almighty, when he permitted his Son to die in support of the truth of his whole mission, affixed the great seal of Jehovah to the work, and thereby declared that all that his ambassador had done, was according to his directions, agreeable to his will, and necessary to the happiness of his subjects and the honor of his government. Let us look for a moment at the order of the works of the mediation. Christ was duly commissioned and empowered for the undertaking by his Father, the Governor of the universe. He was sanctified and anointed for it by the baptism of the Holy Spirit. He received of the power, influence, or spirit of God amply enough to enable him to carry on the work to perfection. He began to reveal and to preach the holy and merciful attributes and character of his Father, and the whole character and duty of men, declaring that he was sent by the Father, thus to preach; and proclaim to all that he was willing to forgive, upon the condition of faith, repentance, and reformation in the sinner; that he was not only specially commissioned for this work, but that he was the Son of God, and that his Father had given him all power in heaven and earth, necessary for its accomplishment. In proof of which he performed wonderful and miraculous works, and lived a life of perfect holiness, obedience, and devotedness to his Father's will. All these works and circumstances would seem to be amply sufficient to induce men, all men, to repent and reform, and implore forgiveness and mercy of Him, who is ever ready to forgive.—But they were not generally so, because of unbelief. Because they would not believe the preacher was the Son of God, the Messiah, sent from God, thus to teach, and thus to declare unto them. If such evidence is not sufficient, what can be? Must man be left and lost in unbelief forever? No. Notwithstanding man's unreasonable, obstinate unbelief, the Almighty from his infinite wisdom, out of his infinite love, has provided other conclusive, irresistible proof. Christ, the Son of God, the Mediator, to finish his mission,

to support the truth of his doctrines and character, died on the cross! This evidence was, at first, so powerful, that it caused the rocks to rend, and the earth to quake! And surely it cannot be rejected by men!

One thing concerning the death of Christ I will here state; it is evident that the unreasonable unbelief of men was the *cause* of it; for otherwise it would have been unnecessary and uncaused. And if there are any, in the present age, who do not believe in Christ, and in his doctrines and mediation, let me seriously ask them, if they are not accessories to his death, even in strict legal construction, "accessories after the fact?"

It appears to me that the miracles, death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ, independently considered, were not the means, by which God brought about the reconciliation of man to himself; but that they were the evidence, the undeniable, irresistible evidence of those things, that were by them made effectual in the case. No other evidence would have been sufficient, such was the coldness of heart and stubborn unbelief of sinners. But *they* convinced, and must ever convince all, that the character given by Christ of himself, and which the Bible everywhere has given of him, is strictly true; that he is the Son of God, the anointed Messiah, the only Mediator between God and man; that all he taught was perfect truth, which, being fully believed, and cordially received, must operate to produce in men repentance and reformation, and so reconciliation to God. And hence it may be said, that Christ was given, and his sufferings and death were a ransom for sinners; because they were the means of convincing unbelievers, and so producing repentance and reformation, and a removal of guilt; a liberation of the sinner from the bondage and slavery of sin and death, and a restoration to liberty and everlasting life. Paul has said, that God gave, and committed to the Apostles, the ministry and word of reconciliation, which must mean all that Christ taught and revealed. God did not give and commit to them the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ. These were the evidences or seals of the ministry of reconciliation, the supporters thereof.

## CHAPTER X.

### SALVATION BY CHRIST.

WE have briefly considered the great and glorious work of Christ, the Son of God, in his mediatorial character. We have attempted to show that Christ was the only Mediator between God and men, that he must be a being between them, that he could not be truly either or both of them; because, in that case, he could not be a being or mediator between them. No person can be a mediator between himself and another person—a nation cannot be a mediator between itself and any other nation. Whenever there is a mediation, there must be two parties, and the mediator between them cannot be one of them, and certainly not both of them. This is in accordance with nature, reason, and the word of God. We have also endeavored to make it appear, that the great object and business of Christ's mediation was the reconciliation of men to God, and not of God to men.

We will now for a moment consider what were the purpose and benefits intended by this work of reconciliation, which Christ performed, and which he said in prayer to his Father, a few days before his death, that he had finished. "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do." What was the design of this great work? "Cui bono?" Was it for the benefit of the Almighty? Was it (as some have foolishly, if not impiously, imagined) to support the honor of God; and to save his justice from reproach? No. It was solely to procure the salvation of men, to save sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." 1 Tim.



i. 15. But what are we to understand by salvation? There are two kinds of salvation, a temporal, material one, such as the deliverance of the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage, for which purpose Moses was their temporal saviour. We have accounts of a great many instances of temporal salvation, and temporal saviors; but they are all as nothing, as a mere drop to the ocean, when compared with the other kind of salvation, the spiritual, the glorious Salvation, which Christ came from heaven to procure for men, for sinners! This salvation is spiritual and eternal. And, in its effects, it is nothing less than a deliverance from sin, misery, and death, and the attainment of forgiveness, happiness, and eternal life, to all who repent and believe. And Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the only Mediator and Saviour, appointed and sent by God to execute this great and glorious work of the Salvation of men. And how did he perform the work? He performed it by his instructions, by his doctrines, by all his teachings, by his miraculous works, by his perfect character, and by all the wonderful events of his whole life; and not peculiarly, specially, and directly, by his death, as will appear upon Scripture examination. "The Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.—The holy Scriptures are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Jesus Christ." And Christ himself said, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life"—they are spiritual salvation. "He that heareth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life"—has received salvation. "Now ye are clean, through the word that I have spoken unto you;" that is, you are freed from your sins, and saved by my instruction. The New Testament is full of such language, showing that the teaching, the instructions, the Gospel, and all acts of Christ, were the means used to convince and convert sinners, to persuade them to repent, reform, and become reconciled to God, and thereby to be made meet subjects for, and to receive salvation, as it is freely offered in the Gospel. Christ never said that his death would give sinners life and salvation. But from what he said to his Father, in his prayer, it is certain that his death was no part of the work of salvation—"I have finished the work thou gavest me to do"—therefore his death, as he was then

living, could not be a part of the work, he had finished. But it was the seal, the evidence, the conclusive, undeniable evidence, of the work; as a seal to a deed for the conveyance or sale of land is not the conveyance or sale, but only the necessary and conclusive evidence of such sale, as it could not be proved in any other way. The seal, therefore, in its effects, must be considered of the highest importance; though, by itself alone, without any sale or contract made, it would have no meaning, it would be of no consequence. The omniscient God knew, that such was the obdurate unbelief of sinners, that they would not, generally, receive the teaching, doctrines, and instructions of Christ, though well proved by their intrinsic perfection, purity, and holiness, and by astonishing miracles,—that they would not believe that he was the Son of God, or a teacher sent from God; that nothing short of his death in support of his doctrines, and his resurrection of the dead, would soften their hearts and remove their unbelief. Hence, in the closing scene of the work of salvation, the death of the Son of God, and his resurrection, were necessary to make the work sure and effectual; to make mankind believe, repent, reform and be willing to be saved. For spiritual salvation has something to do with the mind, and the will. God never will save any person, so long as he is unwilling to be saved—such person cannot be considered to be in a salvable state. You cannot save a man from the sin of intoxication, so long as it is his determined will to continue in a state of constant intemperance. You may perhaps remove his means of intoxication, for a time, but you cannot change his inclination and disposition; you cannot make him *at heart* a temperate man, against his will. I do not believe in forced salvation, or in forced repentance, or in any absolutely forced good thing. Christ, though he had all power, in heaven and earth, given him, never forced his disciples, or any one else, to do a good act. In all his preaching he endeavored to operate upon the understanding and will, by persuasion and instruction, and to move and soften the heart by motives and inducements—these were his works of salvation. He knew that men were constituted, by his Father and their Father, free moral agents; that God had given them a will and understanding, as a rule by which to determine whether to do good or evil; that he had established the constitu-

tion of man; that even God could not make men good, or save them, by his sovereign irresistible power, in a manner contrary to the will and nature, which he had established in them. It is true he has power to alter and renovate that will, and to change that nature. And I believe that he, and he alone, does alter the will of man. But then he does it, and he has a right to do it, in such way as he pleases.— Well, it was his pleasure to determine, that he would not do it by his Almighty sovereign power, against that will unchanged, because that would be violating the free agency, which he had established in the constitution of man; but he decided, that he would change and correct the wrong will, the corrupt will, the stubborn will of sinners, by sending his own beloved Son to preach to them, to instruct them, to reveal to them everything necessary for their good and for their salvation; to persuade, intreat, induce, and move them to repentance and reformation, so that they may willingly receive salvation and happiness, as freely offered in the Gospel. And in this way, according to this plan of his Father, Christ faithfully performed the work of salvation, by renewing the will of sinners, so that there is no impediment in the way, unless it is their unwillingness and unbelief. Christ has put them in a salvable state; and if they will, if they believe, repent, and reform, they may be saved.

I have said, and attempted to show, that the death of Christ was necessary, at the closing scene of his work of salvation and redemption. If it had not been so, it would not, it could not have taken place. For the Almighty never did, and never could do anything that was unnecessary. His infinite wisdom would not suffer him so to do. More especially, would it be impossible, that the allmerciful and loving Father should consent to the sufferings and death of his only dearly beloved Son, in whom he was ever well pleased if it had not been absolutely necessary; if it had not been demanded by the *necessity* of the case. Hence we may behold the amazing love of God, in this great transaction. And in view of the subject, we ought to *feel* the inexpressible obligations, we are under, of everlasting gratitude and love to the Son and Messenger of God, our only constituted Mediator and Savior, for all his labor of love, and for all that he did and suffered to effect and secure the everlasting salvation of our souls.

The view we have taken of this subject is totally different from the worthless reasoning, and strange notion of some, who have held that, as Christ is the Savior of all men, he must be the almighty God, or a part, or a person of the Deity. Now, it is very easy to demonstrate, from the word and attributes of God, and from reason and the nature of things, that of all the works and things, which Christ did as Mediator and Saviour, and which he was authorized and empowered to do by the Father, not one of them could have been done by the Almighty himself, directly and personally. (It is well known, that, according to the laws of God and nature, there are many things that can be done only by an agent.) The supreme, omnipresent God could not be sent, on a message from heaven, and from God; neither could he come, for he is everywhere present, and can come or go nowhere; he could not be born of a virgin, for he is a purely spiritual Being. The unchangable, eternal Spirit could not be, or become man. He could not, with truth, be declared from heaven, at his baptism, to be the beloved Son of God, in whom he was well pleased; he could not at the same time be filled with the Holy Spirit, if he possessed all that Spirit before. He could not personally, and visibly, have taught and instructed the disciples and the multitude, if he was the invisible God. It would be gross impiety to make the great Jehovah a humble teacher and instructor of a company of fishermen and the Jewish multitude. The Supreme God could not have prayed to God, his Father; for such is his nature, that he cannot pray; he can need nothing, and there is no being capable of granting him anything, if he did need. The almighty God could not have said as Christ did, that of himself he could do nothing; that all his works, his doctrines, and his words were not his own, but his Father's who sent him. He could not have wrought miracles, as Christ did, by power received from his Father. The ever blessed, the ever living God could not have suffered and died, he could not have been raised from the dead, as he could not have been dead; and he could not have been taken up into heaven, as he never was therefrom. It is therefore evident that Christ, the Savior, the *Son* of God is not, that while on earth he could not be, the almighty God. Yet he was a great, and transcendently perfect being, high above all others, "the

first born of all creation." "Conjunctissimus Deo!" He was the only being, by nature and his relation to things, perfectly qualified and fitted, through the power of God, to be the instrumental Savior of the world, "to the glory of God the Father!" But though this salvation is, in a common sense, properly called the salvation of Christ, or by Christ, yet it is not the less, in a supreme sense, the salvation of God. Solomon's temple was the temple of the most high God. Though it was built by Solomon, *that* did not make it any less the temple of God, because by him, and by him alone, Solomon was empowered and commanded to build it, "as a dwelling for the Eternal mind!"

According to certain creeds, confessions, and systems of theology, that have been adopted, the plan of salvation by Christ was *not* that he should use the moral power, that God had given him, over the minds of men, for the purpose of changing the will of sinners, of persuading them to repent and reform, of inducing them to "cease to do evil and learn to do well," to put off the old man of sin, and put on the new man of righteousness, to create a new heart within them, to purify their souls, so that they might be capable of enjoying the pleasures and happiness of righteousness; *but* that he should impute to sinners his own righteousness and obedience; that he should pay and satisfy the debt and penalty of "the sins of the whole world;" and that he should procure the pardon of sin, for a *certain* number, absolutely, willing or unwilling, without any repentance or reformation, or any works of righteousness, or obedience on their part; without anything done by them to make them meet subjects of pardon. See what the Westminster Confession saith. "Christ, by his obedience and death, did fully discharge the debt of all those that are thus justified, and did make a proper, real, and full satisfaction to his Father's justice in their behalf." Further, "God justifies men, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by pardoning their sins, and accepting their persons as righteous; not for anything wrought in them or done by them, but for Christ's sake alone; not by imputing faith itself, the act of believing or any other evangelical obedience to them, as their righteousness; but by imputing the obedience and satisfaction of Christ unto them, they receiving and resting on him and his righteousness by faith; which faith they have

not of themselves ; it is the gift of God." Somewhat similar to the foregoing is the doctrine of the Church of England, as expressed in their thirty-first article of religion. "The offering of Christ, once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual ; and there is none other satisfaction for sin, but that alone."

It appears to me that if any one will closely examine and consider candidly this doctrine of salvation, he must acknowledge that it is totally at variance with the facts of the case, that it is directly contrary to that plan of salvation, which the Almighty, in his infinite wisdom and love, devised, and which his only Son, by *his* power and authority executed for the benefit of men and "to the glory of God the Father." That it is inconsistent with the attributes of God, and the nature of man, that it deranges and annihilates all moral duties, moral goodness and actions of man, that it destroys man's free will, free agency, and makes him a mere machine ; and represents the Almighty as the most unreasonable of tyrants. But let us examine it a little in detail, and see if we can find in it anything that is good and true ; anything that is consistent with the word and character of God.

It is said that Christ, by his obedience and death, discharged the debt of sinners, so that they might be saved truly by him. But what is meant by debt ? The term, when used in the Scriptures, in relation to God and man, undoubtedly means trespass, sin, guilt, or transgression. This debt could not be contracted, could not have existed, without the free exercise of the will and understanding of man, and his deeds flowing therefrom ; it is a personal, untransferable exercise and act, that cannot be done by another. If I defame my good neighbor, falsely call him a thief a third person cannot satisfy or discharge the offence ; or if he could I should not be less guilty, while I remained of the same malicious disposition. The only way the offence or trespass can be removed, and satisfaction made, is by acknowledgment of the wrong I have done my neighbor, by asking his pardon, and by dealing justly and kindly towards him afterwards. So with sinners, if not only Christ, but all the angels in heaven, had died to pay the debt of their sins, as respects them it would be no payment without their

regeneration; without their being born again they could not be saved; because they would not be the less guilty, (but rather more guilty,) or better fitted to receive salvation. The tears of repentance and the pure water of reformation can alone wash away their guilt. They can be saved from their sins, only by discontinuing and forsaking them, of their own free will, and not by compulsion. True they may be made willing by the power of God, and will be so, before they can receive salvation.

Again it is said, by some, that the salvation of sinners can be effected only by the special power of God, through the influence of the Holy Spirit, without any regard to the emotions of the mind, or the actions of the will of sinners, who are totally depraved, and wholly incapable of doing anything that even approximates towards a good action; that the mind of man remains entirely passive, till it is mysteriously operated upon, by the special sovereign power of God, or the miraculous influence of the Holy Ghost. Now if this doctrine were true, it would follow, that the mission of the Son of God, our Savior, was unnecessary and useless; and that the Father, in sending him, acted unwisely and improperly. The works, which our Savior was sent to do, were to teach, to instruct, to call on men to repent, to work miracles, in short as Paul expressly said, "to save sinners;" that is, to save them from their sins, to make them cease to sin, or "to do evil," by persuading and inducing them to repent and reform. But all these works of love and goodness were unnecessary and useless, according to this doctrine, for it was impossible they could have any good effect. Nay, it was worse than useless, it was an insult to the Son, to send him on a mission, the objects of which it was impossible for him to accomplish. And instead of a display of the amazing love of God, it would have been a manifestation of mere folly and impropriety in the Father, to send his Son to save sinners, when he knew that their natures were such, that it would be impossible for him to effect the object; that it would be only sending him to suffer and die, in a useless undertaking. This would seem like a mission, in which the person sent had no power to communicate effectually, and they, to whom he is sent, are incapable of receiving any benefit from the message; for, observe, (according to the aforesaid doctrine,) God and

the Holy Spirit only have power to effect anything in this case. So it would look like an implication, that the all wise God made a mistake, and sent the wrong person, that he sent one whom he had not fully empowered, while he had another person, the Holy Spirit, whom he had sufficiently empowered, but whom he sent not. I cannot believe that there is any doctrine like this taught in the Bible.

The Bible clearly teaches, I think, that the plan of salvation was a wise, merciful, consistent, great, and glorious plan of God, the Father almighty alone; that it was not the plan of the Son or the Holy Spirit; though an important part of the plan was that God would save sinners, by or through his only Son—God being the original, primary, almighty Savior, and constituting his Son to be the secondary or instrumental Savior, the great and principal agent, by whom he determined, of his own mere mercy, to save the world. There is, therefore, no inconsistency in the language of the Scriptures, in styling God the Father Savior, and his Son also our Savior; because they are both Saviors, though each is so in a different sense. As in Titus iii. 4, “But after that the kindness and love of God, our Saviour, towards man appeared, which he shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ, our Savior.” And many other such expressions we find in the Bible. And there can be no doubt, but that the Father fully empowered the Son to effect the salvation of sinners; for he would not have sent a messenger for any purpose, without giving him power to accomplish it; or without knowing that the party, for whose benefit it was intended, was capable of receiving the favor designed. But how was the Son to save men from their sins? Not by sovereign power, by physical force; but by teaching, instructing, and persuading them, to repent, to reform, “to cease to do evil and learn to do well.” Yet this they were incapable of doing, say they, who hold to the doctrine alluded to. But whatever good orthodox Christians may say or think, it is evident that the omniscient and just God believed that sinners were capable, (if they would,) of repenting, reforming, and receiving salvation; that they are free agents, or he would not have required it of them; nor would he have promised them pardon, on condition of their doing what he, who is the Maker and Director of all things, had not given them capacity to do. It does not



seem to be quite right for men to set up and profess to believe what the omniscient Being himself never thought of, or has never revealed. Nor can we suppose, that a merciful or even just God could require of his creatures anything which they could not perform.

Mr. Burnap has well said, in his lecture on Salvation, "Christ must save us, if he saves us at all, according to the laws of our own nature, by persuasion, instruction, motive, inducement! And is not this the very nature of his Gospel? Is it not all persuasion, instruction, motive, inducement! Christ saves us then by his Gospel. Its wisdom is superhuman, and carries with it conviction to the mind of man. And God gave the Gospel to Christ." Again he says, "Christ saves men, not by expiating their sins, but by saving them from their sins; not by miraculously changing their natures, but by changing their moral action, through instruction and persuasion; not by overpowering the will, but by exciting it to the right exercise," But to conclude upon this subject, in a few words, I conceive that the Bible clearly teaches that the great Salvation by Christ is comprised in this: that Christ, by all that he did and suffered, saves sinners, not *in* their sins, but *from* their sins, or rather from sinning; not against the consent of their wills, but by persuading their wills, to consent; not by reconciling *God* to them, but by inducing *them* to become reconciled to their merciful and forgiving Father.

## CHAPTER XI.

### THE TRINITY IN UNITY, OR TRIUNITY CONSIDERED.

IN order to substantiate, or invalidate this doctrine, we must first understand what is meant by the term, Trinity in Unity, what those who hold to it really believe; and what they would have others believe. To ascertain this is not an easy matter; because even the word trinity or triunity is nowhere to be found in the Bible, nor can it be found in any theological book or manuscript, before the second or third century. The first appearance of the word was in the writings of Theophilus, bishop of Antioch, in the latter part of the second century. And, at that time, it was used to denote, says Clemens Alexandrinus, "the bond of Christian graces, faith, hope, and charity." Nor had there, at that day, ever existed in the church, any other word of similar signification. How then can it be supposed, that the doctrine of the Trinity is a doctrine of Revelation, when it is not only *not revealed* in the word of God, but when there were no words formed, or in existence, no language known, by which it possibly could be revealed? Did the Almighty empower and commission Plato, Philo, or any other Heathen Philosopher, or Athanasius, or any other learned bishop, to make such revelation, two, three, or four centuries after the preaching of Christ on earth, who never himself made it known, though he was the divine messenger sent from God, and the faithful and true witness?

The self-contradictory term, trinity or triunity, is undoubtedly formed or derived from the two latin words *tres* and *unus*, numeral adjectives, which signify three and one; but

must be applied to some noun or object, to make any sense at all. Besides, they do not work together, they do not harmonize, they are perfect opposites. You cannot apply both three and one to the same subject and make any sense. Instead of tres unus, or triunity, let us say, in simple English, three one men, or three one Gods, or one three man, or one three God; and who can tell what we mean, or discover any sense in what we say? Just as well could you know my opinion, from my answer, if you should ask me, if I believed in the doctrine of the Trinity, and I should answer: Yes. No. It is strange to me, that tres and unus ever got together into one English word, as they are such opposites and disjunctives. They are like fire and water, they cannot exist together, one must destroy the other, if you attempt to unite them. And I wish they were fairly divorced from their unnatural connexion; because I fear that, while it continues, they will constantly produce a brood of contradictions and inconsistencies; for it is the nature of everything to produce its own like. But the present age is not accountable for the production, or introduction of this unnatural term. It was generated by Heathen philosophy, nourished and cherished during the dark ages by Monks and Friars, fed with human creeds, catechisms, and decrees of councils, and supported by the milk and honey of both civil and ecclesiastical power, till it has become gigantic; and having for a long time had a mysterious influence over the churches, now claims to hold them by possession and prescription.

There is another difficulty in ascertaining the meaning of the doctrine of the Trinity, because ever since the third century, Proteus like, it has been constantly changing its form and shape, so that it is necessary to trace its origin, progress, and features, down to the present time; to take a fair view of the whole ground; to see if the position now taken by Trinitarians is the most tenable, and one that can be supported by the Bible. I know of no better way to grapple with this mighty subject, than to state all the most important creeds, doctrines, and dogmas, that have been advanced and held, and to bring them all to the test of Revelation; and see if there is any of them that will fully accord and tally with the Bible. And if we find any that will—seize it, and hold it fast, and not let go whatever name it

may bear. I care not for names, I want the substance; I want the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

Could we find the doctrine of the Trinity clearly and expressly stated by the Prophets, by Christ, or his Apostles, we might stop there, and be satisfied. But that it is *not* so expressly revealed in the word of God, must be acknowledged, and is acknowledged by all. The inference to be drawn from this circumstance will be considered hereafter. The first formal creed of the early Fathers, that I have found, bearing upon this subject, is that of Irenæus, bishop of Lyons, in the second century. He says, "The Church, although dispersed throughout the whole world even to the ends of the earth, has received, from the Apostles and other disciples, that faith, which is in one God, the Father almighty, who made the heavens and the earth, and the sea, and all things that are therein; and in one Jesus Christ, the Son of God, incarnate for the salvation; and in the Holy Spirit, who, by the Prophets, preached the dispensation and advent and the birth of our beloved Lord Jesus Christ from the virgin; and his passion and resurrection from the dead; and his ascension, in the flesh, into heaven; and his coming from heaven, in the glory of the Father, to restore all things, and to recall to life from the dead all flesh of all mortals; so that to Jesus Christ, our Lord and God and Savior and King, by the will of the invisible Father, every knee should bow," &c.

Justin Martyr, who had been a Heathen philosopher, though he composed no formal general creed, wrote much upon the divine nature. In his writings may be found such expressions as the following: "God, in the beginning, before anything was created, begat a rational Power from himself, which is called, by the Holy Ghost, glory of the Lord, and sometimes Son, Wisdom, Angel, God, Lord, Logos. Sometimes also he calls him Leader. In the form of a man he appeared to Joshua, the son of Nun. All the above names he bears, because he ministers to the *will* of the Father, and was begotten by the *will* of the Father. The Father of the Universe, who is unbegotten, has no name; for to have a proper name implies that there is one antecedent to the person named, who has given the appellation. But his Son is called Christ, because God anointed and adorned all things by him." Although this learned

philosophic father, after his conversion to Christianity, in his writings, fully supports the Scripture doctrine of the sole supremacy of God, the Father almighty, and his strict and perfect unity; and also the subordination and inferiority of the Son to the Father; and although he never recognises the anti-scriptural doctrine of three equal persons in one God, yet his views of the Son of God appear to be entirely Platonic; his Christ was nothing more nor less than Philo's Logos, which he had mysteriously interpolated into the Jewish Jehovah.

We next find the creed of Tertullian, the learned presbyter of Carthage, which was, "That the rule of faith is one, the sole rule that is immovable and unchangable, viz. that we believe in the only omnipotent God, the Creator of the world; and in his Son Jesus Christ, born of the virgin Mary, crucified under Pontius Pilate, the third day raised from the dead, received into heaven, sitting now at the right hand of the Father, and about to come," &c. He further adds, "The rule of faith is that by which God is believed to be truly one; nor is there any other Creator of the world besides him, who produced all things from nothing by his word, sent forth before all. This Word, called his Son, was variously held by the Patriarchs, and the *name* of God was always heard by the Prophets, and afterwards from the Spirit, by the power of God the Father, was made flesh in the womb of the virgin Mary, and from her was born as Jesus Christ, who thenceforth preached," &c. In the writings of Tertullian, we may also find the following more Platonic than Biblical remarks. "Before the creation, God was alone, his own world and place, alone because there was nothing extrinsic to him. Yet not alone, for he had with him what he had in him, viz. his own reason. For God is a rational Being, and his reason was in him first, and so all things were derived from him, which reason is his understanding. The Greeks call this Logos, we Sermo. On this account we are accustomed, by simply translating the word (Logos,) to say that the word was in the beginning with God; when we should say, to speak correctly, reason was first, for God from the beginning was not a speaking, but a reasoning Being." Again he says, "God is not always Father because he is always God. For he could not be a Father before he had a Son. There was a time when

the Son was not, who might make the Lord a Father." Again, "Let Hermogenes acknowledge that the wisdom of God is spoken of as born and formed, lest we should believe that anything besides God only was unborn and unformed. For if within God what was from him and in him was not without a beginning, namely, his wisdom, born and formed from the time when the mind of God began to be agitated about the formation of the world, much more must we *deny* that what was without God is eternal."

About the middle of the third century the great, learned and philosophic father Origen wrote his creed, as follows: "Those things, which are plainly delivered by the preaching of the Apostles, are the following: First, there is one God, who created all things to exist out of nothing, who from the first creature and condition of the world is the God of all the just, the God of Adam, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve Patriarchs, Moses, and the Prophets; and that this God, in these last days, as by his Prophets he had previously promised, sent our Lord Jesus Christ to call Israel, but secondly to call the Gentiles, after the unbelief of the people of Israel. This God, the just and good, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, himself gave the law, the Prophets, and the Gospel, who is the God of the Apostles, and of both the Old and New Testaments. Jesus Christ, who came in due time, was born of the Father before every creature; who after having ministered to the Father, in the constitution of all things, (for by him all things were made,) in these last times, emptying himself was made man; he became incarnate, though he was a\* god [a divine being] and he who was a god [a divine being] remained man. He assumed a body like our body, differing only in this, that he was born of the Virgin and the Holy Spirit. And as this Jesus Christ was born and suffered in truth, and not in appearance only, he died a common death; but truly he rose again from the dead; and having conversed with his disciples after his resurrection, he was taken up. Then they (the Apostles) announced that the Holy Spirit was associated with the Father and Son, in honor and dignity, whether begotten or not has not been plainly discovered; but these things are to be ascertained

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\* Origen thus often spoke of the Son.

by investigating the sacred Scriptures with all our power, and with a sagacious inquisition."

We will here notice the decree of the first council of Antioch, assembled A. D. 266, the object of which was not the establishment of any Scriptural doctrines, but to condemn and anathematize Paul of Samosata, for his heresy, "in entertaining low and degrading notions of Christ," (such as that he is not the Supreme God, nor his equal,) "contrary to the doctrine of the *Church*" [not of the Bible]. The fathers and bishops of this council say, "We have resolved, &c., that there is one God, unbegotten, without beginning, invisible, &c. That the Son, who is with the Father, is truly God and Lord of all created things, who being sent from heaven by the Father, and having assumed flesh, was made man. Wherefore in his body, taken from the Virgin, dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, for it was unchangably united to the divinity, and deified. For which cause, the same Jesus Christ was predicted to be both God and man, in the Law and in the Prophets, and he is believed to be truly God by all the churches under heaven." [But not by the church in heaven, I imagine.] "Who emptied himself, though he was equal with God, and became a man, of the seed of David according to the flesh." And they further resolve, "that whosoever preaches, that the Son of God is not God, such an one we judge to be an alien from the ecclesiastical rule of faith, and all the Catholic Churches agree with us." And so Paul of Samosata was condemned and anathematized; and so must Paul the Apostle have been by the same decree, if he had been living; for he preached and particularly taught, that the Son of God was not God, the Supreme God, but that he was less—"My Father is greater than I," he taught.

The next creed, in order of time, is that of Gregory, bishop of Niocæsarea, surnamed Thaumaturgus, who says, "There is one God, the Father of the living Word, the guiding wisdom and the everlasting power and image, the perfect Begetter of the perfect begotten Son. There is one Lord, the only one from the only one, God of God, the character and image of Deity; and the eternal of the Eternal. There is one Holy Spirit, having existence from God, who appeared by the Son to men, the image of the Son, the perfect of the perfect, the worthy life of the living, the holy

fountain of holiness, in whom God the Father is manifested, who is over all and in all, and God the Son, who is through all, the perfect Trinity, whose glory and kingdom and government is never divided or destroyed."

We come now to the famous decree of the Council of Nice, A. D. 325. But before we look at this decree, it may be well to observe, that all the creeds and writings of the fathers previous, though they were filled with Platonism, and much inconsistency, absurdity, and nonsense, and with very little of the pure principles of Christianity, yet furnish us with no traces of the modern Trinitarian doctrine of three equal, independent, self-existent persons in one God. But they fully establish the sole supremacy of the Father almighty, and the inferiority and entire dependence of his Son. They never called the Son almighty, or a self-existent being; nor have they ever said, or used any language that can possibly imply, that "the one Jehovah is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit." Such an unscriptural, absurd idea then had no existence. It was left to be conceived by the folly or mad enthusiasm of after generations. And even this creed, so much relied on by Trinitarians, if closely examined in the whole, will afford no support to this anti-christian doctrine.—Here we give it: "We believe in one God, the Father, Maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, consubstantial with the Father, by whom all things were made, that are in heaven and in earth. Who for us men and for our salvation descended, and was incarnate, and made man; he suffered, and the third day he rose again and ascended into heaven; and he shall come again to judge the living and the dead. And in the Holy Ghost." Concluding with an anathema against all who do not thus believe.

The famous symbol, known by the name of the Athanasian creed, has been placed by creed-compilers next to the Nicene, though very improperly, for it evidently was not known or written, until three or four hundred years after; so Athanasius could not have been the author of it. It is not known who was its author. It is thought it was some superstitious Monk of the dark ages. To be the author of



such an inconsistent, unscriptural, irrational, absurd production, I should think, would be *disgrace enough*, yea too much, for any rational intelligent being to bear with composure. So the author might wisely choose not to be known. It was necessary that it should have a great and popular name to give it currency, as there is nothing intrinsically in it good or consistent. But I will now only quote it at large, intending hereafter to make some remarks upon it. "Who-soever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith, which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, without doubt he shall perish everlastingly. And the catholic faith is this, that we worship one God in trinity, and trinity in unity, neither confounding the persons, nor dividing the substance. For there is one person of the Father, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; but the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one, the glory equal, the majesty coeternal. Such as the Father is, such is the Son, and such is the Holy Ghost. The Father uncreate, the Son uncreate, and the Holy Ghost uncreate. The Father incomprehensible, the Son incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost incomprehensible. The Father eternal, the Son eternal, and the Holy Ghost eternal. And yet there are not three eternal, but one eternal. Also there are not three incomprehensibles, nor three uncreated, but one uncreated, and one incomprehensible. So likewise the Father is almighty, the Son almighty, and the Holy Ghost almighty, yet there are not three almighties, but one almighty. So the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, yet there are not three Gods, but one God. So also the Father is Lord, the Son is Lord, and the Holy Ghost is Lord, yet there are not three Lords, but one Lord. For like as we are compelled by the Christian verity to acknowledge *every* person by *himself* to be God and Lord, so we are forbidden by the catholic religion to say there are three Gods, or three Lords. The Father is made of none, neither created nor begotten. The Son is of the Father, also not created, but begotten. The Holy Ghost is of the Father and the Son, neither made nor created, nor begotten, but proceeding. So there is one Father, not three Fathers, one Son, not three Sons, one Holy Ghost, not three Holy Ghosts. And in this trinity there is none afore or after

other, none is greater or less than another. But the whole three persons are coeternal together, and coequal: so that in all things, as aforesaid, the unity in trinity, and trinity in unity, is to be worshipped. He therefore that will be saved must thus think of the Trinity. Furthermore, it is necessary to everlasting salvation, that he also believe rightly of the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ. For the right faith is that we believe and confess, that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is God and man. God of the substance of the Father, begotten before the world, and man of the substance of his mother born in the world—perfect God and perfect man, of a reasonable soul, and human flesh subsisting. Equal to the Father as touching his Godhead, and inferior to the Father, as touching his manhood. Who though he be God and man, yet he is not two but one Christ. One, not by converting the Godhead into flesh, but by taking the manhood into God. One altogether, not by confusion of substance, but by unity of person. For as the reasonable soul and flesh is one man, so God and man is one Christ, who suffered for our salvation, descended into hell, rose again the third day from the dead. He ascended into heaven, he sitteth on the right hand of the Father God Almighty, from whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead, &c. This is the catholic faith, which except a man believe faithfully he cannot be saved.”

In A. D. 381, the emperor Theodosius called the first council of Constantinople to mend the creeds, so as to anathematize Macedonius, for his *abominable wickedness* in denying the supreme divinity of the Holy Ghost, and his being a distinct person, proceeding from the Father and the Son. This council accordingly anathematized Macedonius, and put a patch upon the creed, so that none might dare to offend against the Church doctrine afterwards. They decreed “that the Holy Ghost was the Lord and giver of life, proceeding from the Father and Son to be worshipped and glorified.”

I might state numerous other creeds during the fourth and fifth centuries, (a remarkable creed-making age,) such as that of the ninety-seven bishops at Antioch; the second council held at Sardis, from various provinces of the East; that of Cyril, the celebrated bishop of Jerusalem; that of St Epiphanius, bishop of Cypress; that of Basil, bishop of

Cesarea; that of Gregory Nazianzen, bishop of Constantinople; that of St. Augustine, bishop of Hippo in Africa, called the great ecclesiastical luminary of his age; that of John surnamed Chrysostom, bishop of Constantinople, famous for his eloquence and zeal; and many others; but it is unnecessary to state them at large. They all hold to one supreme God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was begotten of the Father, and was subordinate to him, and had his existence from him; and one Holy Ghost proceeding, either from the Father, or from the Father and Son, and of course inferior to both. They seemed to consider the Nicene Creed with its amendments, as a sort of common theological law, and they occasionally made some alterations to hit particular cases, and only for the purpose of condemning, deposing, and anathematizing some supposed heretics. They were not willing that the tares should "grow together with the wheat till the harvest." And I am inclined to believe, that in attempting to pull out the tares, they stopped the growth of the wheat, more than they destroyed the tares.

From the fifth century, during most of the dark ages, I apprehend there was no great change in the Trinitarian doctrines or creeds. What had been invented was well adapted to the times, being more in alliance with darkness than light, more consistent with Monkish superstition and Platonized Christianity, than with the pure, plain doctrines of the Bible, reason, and common sense; and better calculated to bewilder the understanding, than to enlighten and direct the mind. Since then, the modern Trinitarian doctrine, after various twistings and turnings, seems to be settled down into a belief in one God in three equal persons or beings, each of them by himself the supreme, self-existent God, yet all three but one God, even numerically, absolutely, and not figuratively speaking. Or in other words more astounding, if possible, that the one Supreme Jehovah is or consists of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or in technical language, that God is trinity in unity and unity in trinity! Though all Trinitarians hold to these three persons, or three somewhats in Deity, yet they differ very much concerning them. I will state some of their views.

The ancient and some of the modern Trinitarians have considered the Father as the fountain of divinity, whose ex-

istence alone is underived and self-existent; and have regarded the Son and Spirit as receiving their existence from him, and being subordinate to him; but at the same time, as equally with the Father possessing, by communication from him, all divine attributes. Bishops Pearson, Bull, and others were of this opinion. Bishop Pearson says expressly, "The Son is subordinate to the Father, and so is the Holy Ghost to the Father and Son." "The Father," saith Christ, "is greater then I." "The Father," saith Bishop Pearson, "is greater in respect to the communication of the Godhead. The divine essence, which Christ had as the Word, before he was conceived by the virgin Mary, he had not of himself, but by communication from God the Father. For this is not to be denied, that there can be but one person originally of himself subsisting, in that infinite Being, because a plurality of more persons, so subsisting, would necessarily infer a multiplicity of Gods. Wherefore it followeth, that Jesus Christ, who is certainly not the Father, cannot be a person subsisting in the divine nature, originally, of himself." This is good reasoning, and the inference is just. But if Christ could not be a person subsisting in Deity originally, could the bishop, or can any one now living, show how it is possible for him now, or at any other time, to be or have been such person so subsisting? Has the divine nature been changed or enlarged, so as to be able to take in one or two more persons than it could originally have sustained? And if a plurality of persons, *originally* subsisting in the infinite Being, necessarily would infer a multiplicity of Gods, must not such plurality, at this time, and at all times, produce the same necessary inference? It certainly must. Therefore all who hold to three equal persons in Deity must also, according to Bishop Pearson, hold to a multiplicity of Gods, at least to the number of three.

Bishop Bull maintained, that "though the Son is equal to the Father in nature and every essential perfection, yet the Father is greater than the Son, even as regards his divinity; because the Father is the origin of the Son." And yet strange as it may seem he contends, that "the Son, as a real person distinct from the Father, is equally God, possessing equally all divine perfections, the only difference be-

ing that the perfections as they exist in the Son are derived, and as they exist in the Father are underived."

Dr. Wm. Sherlock speaking of the persons remarks that, "to say that there are three divine persons, and not three distinct infinite minds, is both heresy and nonsense. The distinction of persons cannot be more truly and aptly represented, than by the distinction between three men. For Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are as really three distinct persons, as Peter, James, and John. We must allow the Divine persons to be *real* substantial beings."

Mr. How, of high reputation among Calvinists, regards "the divine persons as three distinct individuals, necessarily existing, spiritual beings, who formed together the most delicious society!" A society of Gods, it must be, for one God could not make a society!

Dr. Waterland considers person and intelligent being to be the same. Mr. Locke defines person to be a thinking intelligent being. Dr. Doddridge says, "the word person commonly signifies one single, intelligent, voluntary agent, or conscious being; and this we choose to call the philosophical sense of the word; but in a political sense it may express the different relations supported by the same political person; the same man may be father, husband," &c. And afterwards he says, "if it be inquired in what sense the word person is used in the proposition respecting the three persons in the Godhead, we answer, it must at least be true in a political sense, yet cannot amount to so much as a philosophical personality, unless we allow a plurality of Gods."

Dr. South makes the persons to be "*internal* relations of one substance of Deity to itself."

Dr. Wallace makes them *external* relations of the Deity to mankind. Zaaky says, "a person is nothing but the divine essence distinguished, and, as it were, individuated by certain personal property." Junius thinks the persons are distinguished from the essence, in notion only.

Mr. Baxter says, there is in God a trinity of essential, formal, inadequate conceptions or primalities, viz., vital active power, intellect, and will."

How again supposes that there are three distinct, eternal Spirits, or distinct intelligent hypostacies, which, on account of their consent, affection, and mutual self-consciousness,

may be called the one God." Dr. Waterland, Abraham Taylor, and many others make three proper distinct persons, entirely equal to and independent on each other, yet making up one and the same being.

Dr. Watts held to one supreme God dwelling in the human nature of Christ, which he supposes existed the first of all creatures, and speaks of the Logos, as the wisdom of God, and the Holy Spirit, as the divine power, or influence and effect of it, which he says is a scriptural person.

Dr. Tillotson, instead of saying three persons in the Godhead, says three differences; Bishop Burnet says three diversities; Dr. Wallis, three somewhats, and Archbishop Secker says three subsistencies. And some have substituted, in place of these three *rexations* persons, a threefold distinction, they know not what, but they say that there must be a distinction of a threefold nature in the Deity. St. Augustine, when asked what the three are, said, "Human language is scanty and affords not terms to express it, it is therefore answered, three persons, not as if that was to the purpose, but somewhat must be said, and we must not be silent." Some have made the three persons to be three attributes of Deity, as his wisdom, power, and goodness. And there have been many other strange notions upon this subject. But what pity it is, that nothing can be found in the Bible, that bears any resemblance to any of them.

But before entering upon the consideration of the evidence, relative to the Trinity, I must observe that it will be necessary to carry constantly along with us the most essential, fundamental parts of the doctrine, such as that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each separately is God, is Lord, is almighty, is eternal, is omniscient, is uncreated, &c.; and that the Father *alone* has an underived essence and existence; that the Son is begotten of the Father, and that the Holy Spirit proceedeth from the Father and the Son; that the three persons, (though each is God, Lord, &c.,) after having hitched on to them the technical term (as they call it) of persons, (a term nowhere applied to them in the Bible,) are but *oue* God, *one* Lord, &c.; and although the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all *three* have but one nature, yet *one* of them, the Son *alone* has two natures! A part contains twice as much as the whole! New axiom! What need have we of further evidence? The very state-

ment alone of the doctrine contradicts and confounds it. But as the subject is of great importance, since the doctrine has ("per fas, aut nefas") taken possession of the minds of a great part of the Christian world, I shall proceed to consider the evidence relative to the subject, as though it were possible, and even probable, that the doctrine might be true.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE EVIDENCE RELATIVE TO THE TRINITY CONSIDERED.

We shall now attempt to produce all the most important and material evidence concerning the doctrine of the Trinity. It must be acknowledged, that the doctrine, in whatever form or words it is stated, is an affirmative proposition, and according to the established rules of evidence must be proved beyond all reasonable doubt. We may not take for granted, that it is true, and then require the opponents to prove the negative. We must first support the affirmative, by at *least* prima facie evidence. I will therefore proceed to examine the proof in support of the doctrine; first observing, that no conclusive evidence can be obtained, but what is produced from the revelation of God himself; as there is no other being who can of himself have any undervived knowledge on the subject. I will commence with the beginning of the written revelation, not because I consider the Old Testament *as* perfect, clear, and conclusive upon this subject, as the New; but because it is first in order of time. It would, however, be natural to expect that the Almighty, in making his first revelation to his intelligent creatures, would fully reveal *himself*, his essential character, his existence, and his mode of existence, if there was anything peculiar in that; that he would make clearly known all that was necessary for his creatures to know; and what he did not so reveal, he did not require any one to believe. Let us examine the evidence as in Genesis and onward.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and darkness was upon the face of the deep: and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God



said let there be light," &c. Now the Hebrew word Elohim, which is translated God, it is agreed, is of the plural number, or at least has a plural termination. Therefore it is argued, that there must be something plural in the Creator. Trinitarians say it is a plurality of three persons in God. But where is the evidence to support this supposition? The Bible does not furnish it. Does nature give it? No. The natural inference would be a plurality of Gods. But this the Bible and all nature reject. The word *man* is of the singular number, and we know it must mean one being; *men* is plural, which we also know does mean two or more human beings, not two or three persons in one human being. If then God the singular is one being, must not the plural be two or more Gods? But I am inclined to believe that the Hebrew word Elohim was not used as exclusively plural. It might have been used both as singular and plural, as many words in our language are. And it has a plural termination, as many English names have, as Andrews, Phillips, Adams, &c. These names have a plural aspect in the termination. But the possessors of those names have not each of them three persons subsisting in them. But what most convinces me, is that neither Christ nor his Apostles ever hinted that the Hebrew name of God is plural. The Apostles have not once written for God the plural number *Θεοι*, but always the singular, *ο Θεος*. In the whole of the New Testament the supreme God is not once designated by any name in the plural number, which must be proof that there is nothing of a plural nature pertaining to his existence. If there had been, the "faithful and true witness" must have revealed it, or his Apostles afterwards would have made it known.

But in Genesis i. the 26th verse is considered by some as a strong proof of a plurality in the Godhead. And God said, "let *us* make man in *our* image, after *our* likeness." And similar expressions are used in several other texts;—"Behold the man has become as one of *us*, to know good and evil.—Let *us* go down," &c.—"Whom shall *I* send, who will go for *us*?" Here the pronouns *our* and *us* are certainly in the plural number, and by themselves considered, carry a plural implication; but we find in the next verse the plural changed to the singular—"So God created man in *his* own image, in the image of God created *he* him, male

and female created *he* them." Here we have three to one (and if we take the whole Bible we shall have a hundred to one) against the plurality. If the use of one or half a dozen plural expressions applied to God is proof of a plurality in the Deity, surely three or three thousand similar singular expressions must change the plural into a singular meaning. And if we examine the whole Bible, we shall find that God speaks, or is spoken of, five hundred times oftener in the singular than in the plural number. This, one would think, would be sufficient evidence of the strict unity of God, and not of any kind of plurality. Suppose the affidavit of a witness should *once* declare of a certain man, that his name is John, but in other parts of the same affidavit, it is asserted a hundred times that his name is James, and that he was never known by any other name, but James; would any one still believe that the man's name is John? No. But it would be said that there must have been a mistake, in inserting the name of John, in some of the copies; for the affidavit, like the Bible, had been copied many hundred times. And there may be verbal errors in the Bible as well as any other book, as we have before shown.

But there is a greater difficulty. These expressions, if they prove anything, prove what no one wants to prove, and what no one can believe. They prove a plurality of Gods, the number unlimited, from two upwards. There is no hint of anything like persons, or distinctions, or hypostacies, or differences, or subsistences, or somewhats. If there is any plurality, it must be a plurality of Gods; which the Bible rejects, and which no Christian of any sect holds. But if we will be reasonable, and consider the whole of the Scriptures, we shall find no difficulty in reconciling these few plural expressions, applied to God, consistently with the unity of Deity, and the common use of language in every age. It is well known that in Hebrew, as well as our own language, the plural number is often used for the singular, especially when the subject is that of power or majesty. A King, Governor, or Judge, says *we* command; or such and such is *our* will, or *our* decree. And all writers, theological as well as others, use frequently the plural number, when their meaning is singular; they say *we* when they mean *I*. And we must consider that, though the Bible is the word of God, yet the language is the language of men.

The books of the Pentateuch were written in the language of Moses. For although Moses was inspired to write them, yet it is not to be supposed that the Almighty directly taught him Grammar, or instructed him when to use a plural verb, noun, or pronoun, or when a singular one, or any strict grammatical rules. Moses had before been taught languages; he was skilled in all the science of Egypt; and he undoubtedly wrote according to the best and most approved style of the age. And probably he understood the idiom of the Hebrew language, as well as any of our modern professors thereof. But it is evident we cannot establish or determine any important doctrine or creed, by the plural or singular expressions used by Moses. For we shall find by examining his writings, that he very often, a great many times, used the singular number, when the subject and meaning required a plural noun or pronoun. Take the ten commandments, which were delivered for the observance of all the children of Israel, and intended to be kept by all mankind; yet according to strict grammatical construction, they were delivered and were applicable to but one single person.—“*Thou* (not *ye*) shalt have no other God before me.—“*Thou* (not *ye*) shalt not make unto *thee* (not *you*) any graven image,” &c. “*Thou* shalt not steal,” and so of the rest. Then turn to Leviticus, where Moses delivered the Law for the observance of all the children of Israel. “And when *ye* reap the harvest of your land, *thou* shalt not wholly reap the corners,” &c.—“*thou* shalt leave them,” &c.—“*Ye* shall not swear by my name, falsely, neither shalt *thou* profane the name of *thy* God.—*Ye* shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; *thou* shalt not respect,” &c.—“but in righteousness shalt *thou* judge *thy* neighbor.” And so we find a constant changing from plural to singular, and from singular to plural, without any change of subject, or any apparent cause whatever. So in Deut. chapter vi., and many other places, we find *ye* and *thou*, both alternately, frequently used for the children of Israel. Now let any one examine all the writings of Moses and the Prophets, and also of the New Testament, and then say if he thinks the doctrine of the Trinity must stand, or fall, according to any strict grammatical construction of the language in either testament, or by the omission or insertion of a Greek article. “*Qui hæret in litera, hæret in cortice.*” And while

one keeps his eye fixed on the shadow, he will not see the substance.

There is one explanatory view, which, I think, must satisfy all plurality thinkers upon this subject. If the Son of God, as Trinitarians believe, and as John is supposed to say, was with God in the beginning, at the creation, if God by him created the heavens and the earth, and all beings and things therein, if he gave him all power in heaven and earth, if he had appointed him to be the Savior of man, after he should have transgressed, and if the Son was, as Paul says, "the express image of the person" of God, it is perfectly natural that the Supreme Father and Creator should say to, and in honor of, *such* a Son, so highly exalted, so endowed with all power, so deeply interested in the great work about to be performed, his dearly beloved and only begotten Son, "Let us make man, in our image, after our likeness,—for I have given you my moral image and likeness, and my power, so that what you do, I do by you. Now, my Son, let us make man after our moral image and likeness, perfect and holy, so that if he should transgress and sin, it will be of his own fault, and not that of his construction." Upon this view, God and his Son would be all that would be necessarily meant by *our* and *us*. There would be no need of turning the spirit of God into a personal being, to make up the plurality. It should be here observed, that the expression, "the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters," if literally translated, would read the wind or breath of God moved upon, &c., that is, the wind caused the waves to flow, as it does to this day. It would be ridiculous to suppose that a God, or the Almighty, or a person of Deity moved upon the face of the waters, like Neptune, the heathen water-god, tossing the billows with his trident. But this view of the subject does not make the Son self-existent, or equal with the Father, nor the Father and the Son one being, but the contrary; for the 27th verse states that God in his unity, in the singular number, performed the work—"he created man, in *his* own image," &c., by his own power. If then the expressions, *us* and *our*, in these texts necessarily imply a plurality of persons, it is natural to conclude, that that plurality consists of the Father and his only Son, who are two distinct and different persons or beings, and so make a plurality.

Mr. William Jones has brought forward, as proof of this doctrine, the 18th verse of the fifth chapter of Daniel; "The most high God gave to Nebuchadnezzar a kingdom, and majesty, and glory, and honor;" and then adds on to it, the last part of the 20th verse, "and *they* took his glory from him." And how can it be imagined, that he makes anything out of these two disconnected parts of verses? Why, he says, the word "*they*" is a plain relative to the most high God," and so proof of a plurality of something; it must be of Gods, if anything. But how can this be? The law of grammar is, that the relative must agree with its antecedent in number, &c. But the expression, "the most high God," is in the singular number, and the word *they* is plural; so there is no agreement in number. To make them consistently relative and antecedent, *they* must be changed *he*, or *God* must be changed to *Gods*. But look at the next verse. "They fed him with grass like oxen." Did Mr. Jones suppose the word *they* here used is also a plain relative to the most high God? And that the Almighty, personally, or in three persons, fed him with grass, as an ox-feeder feeds his ox? It is too ridiculous for comment. I do not mean, that there is anything in the Bible ridiculous, but that such strange notions respecting the Bible are ridiculous.

Another proof text offered by Mr. Jones is from Psalms xxxiii. 6; "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." Here Mr. Jones considers "the word of the Lord" the second, and "the breath of his mouth" the third person of the Trinity. But he gives no account of the Father, the first person. Where was he, while the second and third persons were severally performing their works? Did he assist or take a part, or not? According to Mr. Jones, the Almighty Father, the first person, could have nothing to do about the creation of the heavens, and the host of them, for they were made by other persons, by the second and third! But whatever may be said by this learned divine, if any man of common sense will read the whole of this Psalm, he must be satisfied, that the sixth verse is figurative language, and that the meaning of the writer was, that the heavens and the host thereof were made by the power and wisdom of God; or that he made them by his own power and wisdom.

And the whole Bible sanctions this construction. It is not good to turn texts of Scripture into riddles, when the meaning thereof is as clear as the sun at noon-day.

Again, Mr. Jones cites Isaiah *xlvi.* 16; "And now the Lord God and his spirit hath sent me.", Mr. Jones asserts positively, that the speaker here who is sent is Christ. But the Prophet does not say so. And it is contrary to the language of the New Testament; for Christ is there uniformly represented as sent by the Father only, never by the Spirit; but the reverse; for Christ once said he would send the Spirit. And if he had power to send the Spirit, it is not to be supposed that the Spirit could send him. To suppose that the Spirit sometimes sends the Son, and that the Son sometimes sends the Spirit, seems too much like children's play. Upon a critical examination of the text and context, it appears clearly to me, that the speaker was the Prophet himself, as his language plainly expresses; and therefore all color of evidence of trinity of persons vanishes. But if it were granted, that Christ was the speaker, it would afford no evidence of three coequal, and independent persons of Deity, but the contrary; for the one sent could not be equal to or independent of the other two who sent him. And besides, the spirit of God could not be a distinct person in God, as we shall hereafter show fully. The meaning of the text must be, that the Lord God and his power and influence sent the speaker, the Prophet as he stated.

The same writer has also quoted for a proof text, Isaiah *xxxiv.* 16. "Seek ye out of the book of the Lord and read, ('no one of these shall fail, none shall want her mate;'" this part of the verse Mr. Jones omits, and goes on,) "for my mouth it hath commanded, and his spirit, it hath gathered them." I cannot see any bearing, that this text can have upon the doctrine of the Trinity. But as the burden of proof lies upon the affirmative, upon the advocates of the doctrine, I feel disposed to give all the texts that have ever been considered in any degree as proof texts, though I may not myself be able to see the force of them.

The 24th, 25th, and 26th verses of the sixth chapter of Numbers have been, by some, considered as proof of the Trinity, because there is a threefold repetition of the blessing or benediction. They are as follows, "The Lord bless thee and keep thee! The Lord make his face to shine up-

on thee, and be gracious to thee! The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace!" If the argument is, that the repetition of a benediction, or the name or person of the Almighty three times, is evidence of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, just turn to the 105th Psalm, and see how easy with the same argument we can make ten or a dozen persons in Deity. See verses from 1 to 5. Here may be found as much evidence, and of the same kind, of ten persons in the Godhead, as there is of three in Numbers. But is the word of God an enigmatical, obscure revelation, or a plain and intelligible one? Or must we take the revelation of Mr. Jones and other orthodox commentators, to make known to us the revelation of God? Can men, uninspired, unfold the truth more clearly and fully than the Almighty?

Mr. Jones further gives 2 Thess. iii. 5, as a proof text; "The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ." He considers the Lord to be the Holy Spirit, the third person, God the first, and Christ the second. If Mr. Jones had examined the whole Bible, I believe he could not have found the Holy Spirit there called Lord or God, nor any directions to pray to it. But, according to his views, this text is a prayer to the Holy Spirit, the third person, to direct the hearts into the love of the first, and into the patient waiting for the second. Such strange ideas require no comment.

Matthew xxviii. 19, has been considered a strong proof of the trinitarian doctrine. We will examine it fully. "Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," &c. To understand this verse, it is necessary to notice the previous one, as that shows the authority by which Christ gave the directions in this. It was in consequence of what he stated in the 18th verse, that he gave the command to his disciples, as stated in the 19th verse; "And Jesus coming spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me, in heaven and earth: go ye, therefore," or in consequence of this power, given me by the Father, I command you to go and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c. Hence it is evident, that the authority to baptize was given by Christ by virtue of the power given him, and not by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, as some have imagined

Dr. Thomas Scott in his note on this text says, that "the Apostles were directed to baptize those who embraced the Gospel, into the *name* (not names) of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit—that there is but one name." Strange assertion! when there are three names, expressly stated. The name of the Father is one, the name of the Son is another, which makes two, and the name of the Holy Spirit is another, which makes three names. The text as it is, is a usual abbreviation of language. If it had been written in full, it would have read thus,—baptizing them in the name of the Father, and also in the name of the Son, and likewise in the name of the Holy Spirit,—as much three different names, as would be the name of Abraham, and the name of Isaac, and the name of Jacob. It would have been otherwise, if the text had been written "baptizing them in the name" of the one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, or in the name of the triune God, or one God in three persons, or of trinity in unity. And in some such form Matthew must have written the passage, if he had believed the trinitarian doctrine. But the fact is, that at that time, such an inconsistent, absurd idea, as a triune God, or three-one Being, had never entered into the imagination of any intelligent being, so far as we are informed, either in heaven or in earth. It cannot be found in the Bible, nor in any ancient history or scientific writings. Alas, this trinity in unity is a strange being!

The term *το ονομα* (name) in this text may be considered as superfluous. Professor Norton says, "the Greek word rendered name, in this passage, as often in the Scriptures, is redundant. It is used pleonastically, by an idiom of the Hebraistic Greek, in which the Septuagint and the New Testament are written. We have not the same turn of expression in our language. In the original it adds nothing to the sense of the passage. When literally rendered into any other language, in which the same idiom does not exist, it tends only to obscure the meaning. It should not, therefore, appear in a translation into English. But if the term *name* be retained, there is no ground for the rendering, 'baptizing them *in* the name.' The Greek preposition *εις* should be rendered *to*. The whole passage may be thus translated, Go ye therefore, make disciples of all nations, baptizing them to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Ho-



ly Spirit. The meaning of which is, go and make converts of all nations, dedicating them by the rite of baptism, through which they are to make solemn public profession of their faith to the worship of the Father, the only true God, to the religion he has taught them by his Son, and to the enjoyment of those holy influences which accompany its reception." Thus writes the learned and sensible Professor. To me it appears, that the design of the institution of baptism was, that it should be considered as a pledge, from those who receive it, of their faith in the Supreme Father of the Universe, the Creator, Governor, and Director of all things, to whom supreme worship and honor are due; and in his only Son, the constituted Saviour of all who believe in him, receive his doctrines, repent, and reform; and in the influence and power of God, by his Spirit sanctifying and regenerating a sinful world.

Dr. Scott further says, that "this text is a most irrefragable proof of the doctrine of the Trinity."—Is it possible that this learned, and (as some call him) great man, could here find evidence to prove all the essential doctrines of the Trinity? Is there a word or a hint, in the passage, that shows that the Son is God, the supreme God, or that he is self-existent, or independent, or equal with the Father almighty? Is there a single expression, that makes the Holy Spirit (which is the spirit of God) God himself, or a self-existent, distinct person in the Deity? Is it stated that the Son and the Holy Spirit are each a person in God, that each is God, and co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, almighty? Is it here declared that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are one God in three persons, or three equal persons in one God? On the contrary, does not every word in the text clearly imply the reverse of all these things? The term Father implies a being, who beget a Son, or caused his existence, who must be superior and anterior to the Son. The term *son* implies dependence upon a father for his existence; that he could not have existed without a father; therefore he cannot be self-existent;—indeed a self-existent son is an impossibility. There are many differences between the Father and Son which are clearly implied, simply by the term *son*; so they cannot both be one being, but must be two, as Abraham and Isaac, father and son, were two men. Again, the term Holy Spirit or spirit

of God, clearly implies the power or an attribute or property of God, and not separately God himself or a person, or part of his being. And the spirit of God cannot be, of itself, independent and self-existent; for if God did not exist himself, surely his spirit could not. Instead therefore of finding in this text proof to support the Trinity, we perceive that it is fully disproved, by necessary implication through the whole. But we need not rely upon implication only, for the Bible in almost every part of it rejects the doctrine. And all nature, reason, and common sense proclaim that it cannot be true. Can the Son of God be that God of whom he is the Son? Is the testimony of Christ, that all power was given him, proof that he possessed it all originally, in his own right, before it was given him? Or if he possessed all power originally, could the same be given him? Christ repeatedly declared that he had no power, but what was given him of his father, that he could do nothing of himself, that his works and the very words he spoke were not his own, but the Father's who sent him, that he lived by the Father; and a hundred other such like expressions. Can these be proof that he is the supreme, self-existent, independent, eternal, almighty God, possessing of himself, originally and underivedly, all power in heaven and earth?

With regard to the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit, (as I intend to consider that subject separately hereafter,) I will here only observe, that I see no evidence in this text, that furnishes such an idea. And the testimony of the Bible generally shows, that the Holy Spirit, or spirit of God, is used to express the influence, power, or some of the attributes of Deity. The spirit of God, in relation to God, must be like the spirit of a man, in relation to a man; and no one ever imagined, that the spirit of a man is the second or third person of the same man. But perhaps I need not enlarge upon this text, as it may be thought that I have already shown fully, that it affords no proof of the doctrine we are now considering. Yet I cannot omit giving an extract from a manuscript, in my possession, concerning this text, written many years since, by a gentleman who had been educated in the orthodox school. "The word, *therefore*, in this text is a word of much meaning. Taken in connexion with the preceding verse it means, as

it is my Father's will, as I am his general agent, and as he hath given me power and authority to command and direct not only you, but all things in heaven and earth, now as my last injunction to you while here, I direct you to 'go and teach all nations, baptizing them in [to] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit;' three distinct, different beings, (if the Holy Spirit can be considered a being or person,) without any expression, intimating that the three were in any respect (numerically) one; or that there was anything like trinity in unity, or unity in trinity, appertaining to them. Now, if the trinitarian doctrine is true, would not Christ, the Son of God, certainly at his last interview with his disciples on earth, just before his wonderful, glorious, and triumphant ascension to 'his God and our God, his Father and our Father?' I ask, would he not have told them so plainly? Would not he 'who spake as never man spake,' who was a 'faithful and true witness,' have then said to them, in his usual plainness; Verily, verily I say unto you, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are three persons in one God, and one God in three persons; and although you cannot now fully comprehend it, yet I tell you of a truth, that all of us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are, and each of us is, separately and individually, very God, and yet all but one God! Even I, your Lord and Master, who have been crucified, and am just risen from the tomb, am the ever-living, eternal Jehovah! If such had been the expressions of Christ and Matthew, or any of the inspired writers had so recorded them, I would not *disbelieve* the doctrine, though I could not understandingly believe it; I would not reject it, though I could not possibly conceive how it could be true. But we are not required to believe above, or contrary to, what is written. To me there does not appear to be the least direct or even presumptive evidence in this passage to support the doctrine of the Trinity, but the reverse. For the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit appear to be separate and distinct persons or beings, without any evidence of sameness, equality, or unity, in any sense whatever. But the words in a natural, rational, Scriptural sense, show the propriety of the command. First, they were to baptize converts in the name of the Father, or to the Father, because, as Christ taught them, the Father is the original source of

all power, mercy, love, and benevolence, and the only object of supreme worship. And, in the second place, they were to baptize in, or to, the name of the Son, because gratitude, love, and honor are justly due to the great and glorious agent and minister of divine goodness and mercy to man, and because the Son of God was next to the Father in excellence, perfection, exaltation, and glory; and was appointed by him to be our Saviour, and only mediator between God and man. And, in the third place, they were to baptize in the name of the Holy Spirit, because *that* was, by God's appointment, to be the sanctifier of the soul, and the blessed influence, by which all men were to be fitted and prepared for heaven and happiness. In this view of the case there is no mystery or contradiction, but all is reconcilable with the general simplicity of the Gospel."

2 Cor. xiii. 14. "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all." This text is considered by many as proof of the trinitarian doctrine. But I cannot perceive it. There is no declaration that Jesus Christ is God, but the language implies the contrary, speaking of him separately. True, he is called Lord:—and so was David, and so were all the kings of Israel, and other distinguished men of old; and so are Judges, Bishops, and other men even to this day. There is nothing in the text, that proves self-existence or independence in Christ. Nor is the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit even intimated; nor is it stated that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three equal persons in Deity, and yet all but one God; all which things, and more are necessary to support the Trinity. The grace of one, the love of another, and the communion of the third are spoken of as separate, different things or properties, pertaining to entirely different beings, without any suggestion of sameness, equality, junction, or unity, in any respect whatever. And it is almost impossible to imagine, that the learned and inspired Paul would have used the language of the text, if he had intended to convey the modern idea of trinity in unity; but if he did believe in such a doctrine, an important one if true, he would have declared it in plain and certain language, as he might, in few words;—The grace, love, and communion of the Triune God be with you all. Thus would he have written to the Corinthians, if this doc-

trine had been revealed to him; or he would have been an unfaithful preacher of the Gospel, and a deceiver; one who did not "declare the whole counsel of God," but kept back a part of the truth, or delivered it in a blind and unintelligible manner, and prevaricated altogether. The most that can be made of this text is, that it is an expression of Paul's most ardent wish for the temporal and everlasting happiness of the Corinthians; that they might receive the favor and benefits of Christ's salvation; that they might be beloved of God, the Father; and that the influence, consolation, and goodness of God might sanctify and fit them for everlasting joys. The passage is devotional and practical, and not one teaching any particular doctrine. Paul was meditating upon the prosperity and happiness of the Corinthians, and not upon the mode of the existence of the Almighty.

The idea advanced by some, that the text "is a prayer to the Triune God," is without foundation. For we find that Paul concludes some of his epistles with "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ" only; some with the addition of "and the love of God;" and some with "the salutation of me Paul." In none of them is the Holy Spirit included, except in our text. Therefore, if these benedictions or salutations are to be considered as prayers to the persons named, some must be to the Deity of the Son only, some to the Son and Father, and some to the Apostle himself. Paul, I think, would not have admitted this construction; for he always prayed and gave thanks to the Father only, sometimes using the expression God, the Father.

1 John v. 7, "There are three that bear record (who testify μαρτυροῦντες) in heaven, the Father, the word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one." This verse has heretofore been considered as conclusive evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity. But it is now generally given up, by all well-informed men of science, of every sect, as an interpolation, as what was never written by John. As all Christians have not the means of satisfying themselves fully upon this point, I will give a brief statement of the facts concerning it.

It is well known, that the New Testament was originally written by the authors in Greek, and copies were for a long time made in that language only. There was no division

into chapters and verses, as we now have the translation.—“It is a fact,” says Thomas H. Horne, one of the most learned men of the age, and a decided Trinitarian, “that this text is not found in a single manuscript written before the sixteenth century. It is not quoted even in any of the genuine works of the Greek Fathers, or ecclesiastical writers, even in those places, where we should expect it. It is wanting in the earliest and most critical editions of the New Testament. Some of the advocates for it say, ‘the Arians might have expunged it, as being inimical to their doctrine.’ But however wicked and corrupt the Arians might have been, how could they have expunged what never existed? ‘The Codex Monfortianus, or Montfortii,’ is the only manuscript that contains the much contested clause of 1 John v. 7.” And Dr. Adam Clark, a very learned Trinitarian, was of opinion, that this was most probably written in the thirteenth century, and he was inclined to think it the work of an unknown, bold critic. Mr. Martin, in the early part of the last century, claimed for this manuscript a date as early as the eleventh century. But Griesbach, and after him Bishop Marsh, contended that it is at least as modern as the sixteenth or fifteenth century. From one particular circumstance, I believe, it was about the year 1520. For about that time Erasmus had published two editions of the New Testament, but had not inserted this text in either of them, though it had appeared before in some Latin editions.—Erasmus was censured by some on that account. But he said, “he could not insert in his Greek Testament, what he could not find in any Greek manuscript;—but if he could find one single Greek manuscript, that contained it, he would insert it in his next edition.” It was not a year before he was informed, that there was a manuscript, somewhere in England, that contained this clause. And afterwards a copy of such manuscript was furnished, and he inserted it in his next edition, “not because he believed it to be genuine, but because he had promised so to do.” This manuscript was undoubtedly a translation from a Latin copy into Greek, and was offered to Erasmus as genuine, to procure its insertion in his Greek Testament. And this was its first appearance in any Greek Testament. But afterwards, in the same century, it is not found in the German translation of the great reformer, Martin Luther, nor in any

of the editions published by him in his lifetime. The English versions, that contained it, treated it as doubtful, including it between parentheses, or putting it in diminutive letters. Calvin retained it, but spoke of it very doubtfully. Some editors place it in the margin; and in latter days it has been totally rejected, by the most learned Trinitarians, the most accurate and critical scholars, by such men as Griesbach, Adam Clark, Professor Stuart, the most thorough investigating T. H. Horne, and many others, besides a great number of equally learned and accurate anti-trinitarians.

But if this clause were genuine, it would afford no proof of trinity in unity. If I needed proof against it, I would select this passage as conclusive and unanswerable. Look at it candidly. There are three that bear record, (it should be translated, that testify, or give testimony, as the Latin version renders it, for such is the signification of μαρτυροῦντες,) in heaven, and these three are one [ *εἷς* ]. One what? It cannot be one God; for *εἷς* is in the neuter gender; there must be something understood with which *εἷς* (one) can agree; and that must be testimony, (μαρτυρίον,) which is neuter, and *εἷς* will agree with it; so it should read, these three give one or the same testimony. And the translation at the close of the next verse establishes this reading, the Greek words being the same, it is rendered "these three agree in one," that is, in one or the same testimony; or they testify alike. It is not said that there are three equal persons, each of whom is God, that testify, or that the Holy Spirit is any real person, and not a personified attribute only, as *τὸ πνεῦμα* and *τὸ αἷμα* (water and blood) are personified in the 8th verse. It is evident, therefore, that *εἷς* (one) must relate to the testimony, and to the witnesses. And such was the opinion of Dr. Doddridge and other candid Trinitarians. A triune witness is an impossibility. Three witnesses may testify alike on the same subject, but three witnesses cannot be one witness, any more than three worlds can be one world, or three men one man. Besides there is as much reason to say that the spirit, the water, and blood are all one, one essence; but this the translators themselves do not pretend to make out.

I am not a little surprised that such learned men as Bishop Pearson, Mr. Jones, Bishop Hopkins, and many living

teachers of the Gospel, have and do consider this undoubtedly interpolated passage as genuine. If their piety were not as great as their learning, I should almost be led to doubt their honesty and integrity; for I consider it as well established, that this passage is not a part of John's epistle, was never written by him, as it is, that the sun does not move round the earth every twenty-four hours, which was always supposed to be the case, till within four centuries. It is not strange that one, or a small number of passages should be found in the Bible, which are spurious, or interpolations altogether. It is most wonderful, that there are so few as what have been discovered, considering all the revolutions, casualities, and frands that have taken place in the world. In this we must see and acknowledge the overruling, protecting hand of infinite wisdom and goodness. While it is our duty to preserve all that belongs to the sacred Scriptures, all that is truly the word of God, it is as much our duty to reject, if not expunge, whatever may be found to be undeniably spurious, without regard to any sectarian views. We should receive the testimony of God as it was actually delivered, and not as we might wish it had been delivered.

I have now noticed most of the important texts, which have been considered in any degree, as express evidence of the doctrine of the Trinity; and it appears to me, that so far from proving it satisfactorily, they fully disprove it.

But there is another kind of evidence, that is much relied on, which may be called indirect proof, that is, proof by necessary inference, or presumption. This kind of evidence is in most cases admissable, and may be often considered conclusive. But, in using it, special care should be taken to see that the foundation, from which it is drawn, is strong and to be relied on. The facts or positions, from which an inference or presumption is raised, must be well substantiated, proved, or acknowledged. If the inference or presumption is baseless, the evidence will be useless. As for instance, A. is indicted for the murder of B. Presumptive evidence, or evidence of necessary inference is admissable to prove his guilt. But if it appears clearly that B. is still living, if he comes into Court, and is seen by the Court and Jury, all the presumptive evidence in the world could not prove A. guilty; because it is impossible that any man



can have been murdered, who is still living, without a miracle ; there can be no presumption to support impossibilities. This kind of evidence, therefore, must always carry with it not only a possibility, but at least a strong probability ; and it is never to be received alone, when direct and positive testimony can be obtained.

This kind of evidence, for the want of any of an express and direct kind, is relied on by Trinitarians, to prove their doctrine. And how do they state it? After this manner. They say, there is but one God, one Supreme Being. This is fully proved by the Bible, as well as by nature and reason ; and it is acknowledged by all. They then attempt to show and to prove, that the Son of God is God, the supreme God ; and that the Holy Spirit is so likewise ; and as they say, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit each is God, and as there is but one God, they infer that these three must be the one God. This is a presumption or inference directly against possibility. But before we reason philosophically, we will examine the evidence of the Deity of the Son and of the Holy Spirit ; for if any part of the foundation of the inference fails, there will be no need of argument on its propriety or impropriety. As I have already said something respecting the Deity of the son, I will now make some remarks upon that of the Holy Spirit.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### THE PERSONALITY AND DEITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CONSIDERED.

I WILL first enter my protest against the translation of the word *Πνευμα*, *Ghost*, instead of Spirit. It appears to be, at least, an unhappy, unnatural translation, the common acceptation of the meaning of Ghost being the appearance or spirit of a deceased person. It would be *shocking* to say, the Ghost of God! It is not always so translated in the New Testament, and in the Old Testament we nowhere find the expression, Holy Ghost, or Ghost of God, but the term used is always "the spirit of God," except in two or three instances, "his holy spirit" is used. I do not know why it should have been so translated, unless to have a certain affect upon children and weak minds, or to give some appearance of personality. For if the term, the spirit of God, had always been used, I cannot conceive that any one would think there could be any personality in it, distinct from God himself. Was it ever thought that the spirit of a man is a distinct person in the man? As well might it be said, his head or his arm is a distinct person in him. So the strange idea, that the spirit of God is a distinct person in God, is unwarranted, totally inconsistent both with reason and the Bible. The words, *το αγιον πνευμα* should always be translated the Holy Spirit, which, it is agreed, is synonymous with the spirit of God. There is good reason, why the spirit of God should be called the Holy Spirit, or the Spirit of Holiness, because, as God is perfect in holiness, his spirit must be holy in the highest sense, emphatically, "the Holy Spirit." I shall therefore, notwithstanding King James's translation, render these words, the Holy Spirit (not Ghost). But let us look for the evidence to prove that the

Holy Spirit is God, and a distinct person in Deity. This being an affirmative proposition, it must be proved beyond reasonable doubt, or it must fail.

The *Prima facie* evidence is against the personality of the Holy Spirit, because it is, in the original Greek, and in English, of the neuter gender; and if it is a person of any sort, it is the only person in heaven or earth, that is of that gender. Again, it has no proper name; and if it is entitled to personality, it is the only person in the Universe that has no name. The Holy Spirit is not a proper name; it is only the appellation of a thing or power. Proper names do not have the English article before them. We do not say *the* Jesus, *the* Peter, *the* Paul, or *the* John. Again, according to all we know of spirit, the spirit of a being is the being himself, his whole self, including all his powers and attributes; and not another distinct and different person of that being. The spirit of a man, though a complex being, spiritual and material, is considered to be the whole man, the whole and only person. Spirit or soul is often used in the Bible for man; as "eight souls were saved by water in the ark: Let every soul be subject to higher powers." And there is a stronger reason why the spirit of a purely, exclusively, spiritual being should be considered *as* that being, the whole of that being and not a part or person of him. The true, strict meaning, therefore, of the spirit of God must be God himself, the whole Deity, comprehending all his attributes, powers, and perfections; and not a distinct person or part of him, though it is often used in a figurative sense to denote a single attribute or power of him, as we shall notice hereafter. Such being the *Prima facie* evidence in the case, there is a stronger reason, why the proof of the affirmative of the allegation of the personality and Deity of the spirit should be clear and positive. But such proof is not to be found anywhere in the Bible, in nature, or reason, or in anything we know. It is nowhere asserted in the Scriptures, that the Holy Spirit is God, or the third person in Deity; and certainly it is not so proclaimed in his works. We are therefore obliged to have recourse to inference, or presumptive evidence, to procure proof to support a presumption. This is the best we can do, until we have a new and different revelation, or unless we take the creeds, catechisms, or confessions of uninspired men, in place of a revelation of God.

Now let us examine what there is in the Bible, even of this second sort (in quality) of evidence.

The only evidence even of this nature, found in the Bible, is the conversation of Christ with his disciples, a few days before his crucifixion. And whatever *he* said must be undeniably true; for he was not only the sanctified and sent of the Father, but emphatically, "the true and faithful witness." But he spake in the language of men; his words were such as were used by imperfect men. And the only source we have for knowing and understanding his meaning is the use of that reason and common sense which God has given us for our guide and direction; though some seem to treat these precious gifts with disrespect, as worse than useless. They call our divine reason weak, erring, delusive, and carnal. But does not he, who despises a gift, treat the giver with contempt? And will a just God condemn us for following a guide, he has kindly provided for us? And I seriously ask, could we have any revelation at all without reason? Have irrational animals, the beasts of the field, or the birds of the air, any revelation? Or can one, who was born and has always been an idiot, enjoy the revelation of God's holy word? No. We could have no revelation without reason. And it is also true, that reason would be an imperfect, insufficient guide without revelation. To answer the design of each they must go together, for they *will*, they *do* harmonize like all the works of God, when rightly considered. But let us come to Christ's discourse. It may be found in the 14th, 15th, and 16th, chapters of John's Gospel.

From this discourse, the personality of the Holy Spirit has been inferred or presumed, because Christ speaks of it as a person, and sometimes uses, in relation to it, pronouns of the masculine gender. But if this discourse were evidence of any personality, it is no evidence of a Divine personality, or a person of the Deity. Nothing appears but that it might be the person of an angel, for angels are sent to administer comfort and strength and consolation, even to Christ himself; angels administered and strengthened him. But if we examine the discourse closely, we shall find in it more evidence against the divine personality of the Spirit, than for it. Let us paraphrase it a little. Christ says, "I will pray the Father, (almighty) and he shall give you.

another comforter (or teacher). This comforter could not be Deity, for the supreme God, could not have a Father to give him. And if the spirit (or comforter) were the supreme God, Christ need not apply to the Father to give or send him, but he might have said, I will pray the Spirit to come to you. Of two independent persons was there ever a request made to one, to give or send the other? Besides, the comforter to be given was to be *another* comforter, meaning, undoubtedly that Christ himself was the first. But the disciples had never conceived that their Lord and Master, and then comforter, was the supreme God; therefore they could not suppose that he meant to pray the Father to give them the almighty God, or a person in Deity, for another comforter. They must have understood Christ to mean, that he would pray the Father to give them as much comfort and consolation as they would lose, by his leaving them; and that *that* comfort might be permanent with them, "even the spirit of truth," the truth of the Gospel and the grace of God. These expressions must refer to the grace, influence, communications, or power of God, and not to Deity himself; for in the next verse Christ intimates that he himself would come to them, so that they should not be comfortless. But if the almighty God or a person of Deity was to be given them for a comforter, to abide with them forever, it could not be necessary for Christ also to come to them for that purpose. It is not necessary to examine particularly the whole of this discourse. It appears evidently, it was an affectionate, figurative representation of the special grace, communications and influence of God, (and not God himself,) which were to be bestowed upon the disciples to comfort, aid, and strengthen them in the work they were to undertake.

Another objection to considering this kind of evidence (that of personification) as proof of the personality of the Holy Spirit is, that if, in this case, it proves anything, it may, in other cases, prove too much, more than can be believed by any one. For there is as much evidence, in the Bible, of this sort, respecting the wisdom of God, the grace of God, the mercy of God, and all his attributes and properties, as there is concerning the spirit of God. They are all as often personified; and if personification would make real persons, we might reckon as many Gods, or persons in

Deity, as the Gnostics did. It is well known, that almost everything in the natural and moral world, is occasionally personified, by the best writers ; but that does not prove everything to be a real person. It is worthy of notice, that none of the Evangelists, except John, have given any account of this discourse. Now if the disciples had understood Christ, that the comforter or Holy Spirit, that was to be given them, would be the almighty God, or a person of the Deity, it must have struck them with such amazement, and astonishment, that they would not have forgotten it, and could not possibly have omitted to relate it fully in their Gospels, as the most wonderful revelation they had received.

We will now consider some texts and reasons, which we think clearly show, that the Holy Spirit, or spirit of God, cannot be, either the supreme God, or a distinct person or part of Deity, Paul says, 2 Cor. ii. 11, "For what man knoweth, the things of a man, save the spirit of man, which is in him, even so the things of God knoweth no man (no one, *ουδεις*,) but the spirit of God." By the things of God, here, must be understood, all things concerning him, his secret will and designs included ; otherwise it would not be true ; for there are many things and works of God which have been revealed to us. And the spirit of man must mean all his intellectual powers, which comprehend the whole man ; in respect to knowledge, the subject under consideration. The spirit of God, in relation to God, is considered in the same light, as the spirit of man is, in relation to man. And does any one, did ever any intelligent being imagine, that the spirit of man is another distinct person, than the man himself, and that there are two persons in the one man ? Neither has it ever been revealed to us, by the Prophets, or the Apostles, or the Son of God, or by the Almighty himself, that the spirit of God is another supreme person or being, equal with him, but distinct from him ; I say it has never been so revealed to us, neither do I conceive, that it never can be made known to us ; for it is impossible, for the Almighty himself, to make known an impossibility, to disclose to us what is wholly inconsistent with his nature and laws. The meaning of the last part of this passage, therefore, must be, that no one, no intelligent being, neither the second nor third person of Deity ( if there be

such persons) knoweth the things, that is, the secret purposes of God, but the intelligence of God, or God himself; therefore the supposed third person, the Holy Spirit, cannot be the omniscient God, for *it* knoweth not the secret purposes of God. Again, if "the spirit of God" here is a person in the Trinity, and not God the Father himself, then it necessarily follows, that the Father has no knowledge of his own affairs, of his own purposes! for Paul says, no one knoweth them, "but the spirit of God," and the Father is not the spirit of God. I have heretofore thought, that the doctrine of the Trinity implicitly dethroned the almighty Father; but it did not before occur to me, that it would also deprive him of his omniscience! Will any choose to do *this*, rather than to give up a favorite doctrine? I wish Trinitarians to consider this matter seriously, and to explain it to my satisfaction, if they can. But this is not all; we have express declarations of Christ, which are conclusive evidence upon this point. In Mark xiii. 32, he says, "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no not the Angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father," or as Matthew has it, "but my Father only." The literal, true meaning of the Greek word *ουδεις* (as I have before observed) is no one, no person, no intelligent being; it is not confined to man; it is general. Therefore the spirit, the third person, (if it be a person,) not being the Father, the first person, cannot know that day and hour, and so cannot be the omniscient God, or equal with him in knowledge. And the Father only knowing it must exclude from the knowledge the second and third persons, the Son and Spirit, as certainly it does man and the angels. There is no avoiding this conclusion, without falsifying the testimony of Christ, "the faithful and true witness."

But there is another declaration of Christ equally decisive against the Deity of the Holy Spirit. Christ says, in Luke x. 22, "All things are delivered unto me of my Father, and (*ουδεις*) no one, (no person,) knoweth (fully) who the Son is but the Father, and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him." Here every person in the Universe is excluded from the possession of this knowledge, except the Father and Son, who are called by Trinitarians the first and second persons. But if the Holy Spirit, called the third person, is God, and equal with the Father in knowledge and everything, he must have the

knowledge spoken of. We are therefore obliged to conclude, that the Holy Spirit is not the omniscient God, or equal with him in knowledge; or we must conclude that Christ has told two falsehoods in one text. Which of these conclusions will Trinitarians adopt? Will they give up their favorite, though unsupported doctrine, or will they make their dear Lord and Master a false witness? They must do one or the other; there can be no evasion; the declarations of Christ are plain, clear, and intelligible. If all the learning and science of Jews and Gentiles, and all the ingenuity and power of philosophers had been put in requisition to furnish evidence against the Deity of the Holy Spirit, they could not have been more convincing and conclusive, than are the short, plain, common-sense declarations of Christ himself. Yet, " 't is strange, 't is passing strange," " though true it is," some good, learned, great men have arisen since the third century, who have been willing to undertake to support this strange doctrine, a doctrine which is not only not revealed in the Bible, but is clearly contrary to the word of God, his nature and laws, which are true and immutable. But I do believe, that as the light of the Gospel and the displays of knowledge, science, and history prevail and burst in upon us, the time will come, that it must come, and I hope shortly when it will be thought as strange a thing for a man to assert, that the spirit of God is separately Deity himself, or a person of Deity, as it would be now for a man of science to declare, that the sun goes round the earth every twenty-four hours; yea, more so, for the latter idea has some support from Scripture, if taken literally, (as, " from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same," and other similar expressions,) while the former has none. But it may be thought, that I have already produced enough upon this point; that I have said sufficient to satisfy any reasonable mind, to convince any one disposed to receive the truth as it is in Jesus. Yet as the Scriptures are very full upon this subject, and it may be of importance in settling the whole doctrine of the Trinity, I will consider it a little further; for although some have seemed to think, that the Deity of the Holy Spirit would follow of course, if that of the Son was made out; and others have appeared as if it was a matter of indifference, or of little importance, whether the Godhead of the Holy Spirit were



provable or not ; yet it appears to me, that it is essential to the support of the trinity in unity, that the Deity of each supposed equal person should be fully proved, one as much as another ; the proof of one cannot be proof of the other two, nor can proof of two be proof of the third. The doctrine of the Trinity is like an altar set on three legs ; if one leg is broken or fails, the altar must come down. So this doctrine, if it has any support, is supported by three equal persons, as they are called, each also said to be God ; therefore if either of said persons, no matter which, fails, or disappears, the doctrine must fall. I will therefore endeavor to set this subject in as clear light as possible, it being so connected with the whole Trinitarian doctrine.

We find that the Holy Spirit is generally represented in the Bible as the essence of God himself, or as his power, influence, or attribute, and not as anything distinct from him. And it is often described as belonging to him, as his property, "his spirit," or "the spirit of God," or as one of his attributes, totally inconsistent with any kind of separate personality or Deity. "And the Lord said, *my* spirit shall not always strive with man," &c. "I will put *my* spirit into you, and cause you to walk in my statutes." "Whither shall I go from *thy* spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence?" "If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there *thy* hand shall lead me, and *thy* right hand shall uphold me." "But they rebelled and vexed *his* holy spirit." These expressions all clearly refer to one almighty Being, one supreme Agent or Director. The expressions, "*my* spirit, *thy* spirit, *his* holy spirit," no more mean a distinct, different person or Deity, than the expressions "my statutes, thy presence, thy hand, thy right hand," &c. They all are things, or properties, or attributes ; they are no more distinct persons, than my *house* is a distinct person of myself.

Again, the Spirit of God is often used to represent his essence in action, or his power displayed. "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath (spirit) of his mouth." It is evident, that the word of the Lord and the breath of his mouth mean the same, that is, his power and wisdom. "By his spirit he hath garnished the heavens ; his hand formed the crooked serpent." Can any one doubt, that *his* spirit and *his* hand

both mean the same power and wisdom of God? Or must we be so foolish as to imagine, that one person distinct from the Father garnished the heavens, and another made the crooked serpent? Again we read, "Is the spirit of the Lord straightened? The Lord's hand is not shortened, that he cannot save." Here also the spirit of the Lord and the Lord's hand must be used synonymously, and must both mean the power of God. Again, in the language of the angel to Mary, "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee." Most undoubtedly, "the Holy Spirit and the power of the Most High," both mean the miraculous power of God, and not a personal visitation of Deity. We find that our Saviour himself spoke after this manner: "If I," said he, "cast out devils by the spirit of God," &c.; and in another place, "If I, by the finger of God, cast out devils," &c. It is evident that Christ meant by the finger of God and the spirit of God the same thing, the power of God, that power which he said was given him of the Father. We find it very common, in the Bible and other books, that the same idea as expressed or repeated by different phrases of similar signification. It is thought to add force to language.

We may further observe, that contrary to all appearance of personality or Deity, the Holy Spirit is used in the Bible to denote gifts, and endowments of extraordinary power or wisdom, bestowed in some wonderful manner by God, on some person or persons, as on the chief workmen of the tabernacle. "I have filled him of the chief workmen of the tabernacle with the spirit of God, in wisdom, in understanding, and in all manner of workmanship." Here is nothing of personality or Deity bestowed; it is all wisdom, and understanding, and workmanship. "And the Lord said unto Moses, gather unto me seventy of the elders of Israel, and I will take of the spirit that is upon thee, and put it upon them," "And the Lord came down in a cloud, and took of the spirit that was upon him, and gave it unto the seventy elders. And it came to pass when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied."

By the spirit, which God gave the seventy elders, must be meant the miraculous gifts and endowments of knowledge and understanding which enabled them to prophesy. It can-

not be supposed that God took from Moses the Almighty, or a person of Deity, and gave to the elders. There is nothing here bearing any resemblance to personality or Deity.

“And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord. And shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the Lord.” It is thought by some that this passage has relation to Christ; but to me it appears otherwise. The language of the whole chapter is such as would be most appropriate to a good, pious, and great king, or temporary deliverer, on whom God should bestow extraordinary gifts and powers, and not at all suitable to a spiritual Saviour, or a person of Deity. And I am inclined to believe, that the prophet alluded to the excellent, wise, and great king Hezekiah, who in some respects bore a resemblance to Christ; who was called Emanuel, mighty God, and by other high and lofty titles, so that he was considered by some as the real Messias. But this is a matter not material to the present consideration. Let us see what bearing the passage has upon the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit. “And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him.” But what is meant by the spirit of the Lord? What follows, I think, is a declaration of the meaning; that it is the spirit of wisdom and understanding, and the spirit of counsel and of might, and the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord; or in other words, that the Lord would bestow upon him wisdom, and understanding, and counsel, and might, and knowledge, and the fear of the Lord; which must all be considered as gifts, and comprehended in the term spirit of the Lord; and so conclusive against the personality and Deity of the spirit of the Lord, or the Holy Spirit.

The facts disclosed soon after our saviour's ascension are powerful testimonies upon this subject; and “facts are stubborn things;” facts will not yield to fanciful imaginations, to strange hypotheses, to the prejudices of education, to mystical, unintelligible dogmas, to enthusiastic, monkish superstition; facts will not utter falsehoods. Let us look at the record.

We find that not many days after the ascension, the dis-

ciples did receive, according to Christ's promise, "the gift of the Holy Spirit, or power from on high." From this expression it appears, that the Holy Spirit and power from on high, or the power of God, are the same thing. Read the facts stated in the second chapter of the Acts, and be satisfied what it was that was given, what the disciples received on this memorable occasion. "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they (the disciples) were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as a rushing mighty wind, and filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, as of fire, and sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the holy spirit, and began to speak with other tongues, as the spirit gave them utterance." Is there in this account the least appearance of personality, or a person of Deity? Can a sound from heaven like a rushing mighty wind be a person? Could a person fill all the house where they were sitting; and not be seen by any one? The disciples give no account of their seeing a divine person, which it is presumed they would have done, had it been a fact. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, (by which might be meant divers languages,) and sat (there is nothing for *it* before sat, in the original, so I have omitted the word) on each of them." Could cloven tongues or divers languages be a person, or God, and sit on each of them? Had the disciples any idea that a divine person was on each of them? Was ever any one filled with a person? One may be filled with the principles and virtues of a person, but cannot be filled with his real person. A son may be said to be full of the good traits of his father, or the person of his father. In the days of miracles, a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, was one of the common antecedents to a display of the power of the Almighty, when he bestowed any great and miraculous gifts or privileges on men; as thunder and lightning preceded the delivery of the commandments from Mount Sinai. After this wonderful prelude, if I may so call it, the disciples actually received great and miraculous gifts and endowments, so that they were enabled to speak various languages, which they had never learned, with wonderful force and influence. They were filled with the power and influence of God, which are synonymous with the spirit of God, so that they

might speak other tongues, as that power should direct them. That this was the understanding of the disciples, and that they had no conception, that a divine person was present with them, or that they were filled with him, is evident from all their conduct. They did not address such a person as present; they did not pray to him; they did not fall down and worship such a person, as the supreme, omnipresent God; they did not proclaim to the anxious multitude, that the Almighty or a person of Deity was then, actually and truly, personally in that place; they did not call upon all present to acknowledge and worship such person as the Supreme Being. Nor did they ever afterwards thus worship him, or teach their converts so do so; all which they must have done, if they had considered the Holy Spirit as present and as God. But they seemed to consider all that was done, all that was displayed, as the miraculous gifts, powers, and influences of God, bestowed on them to enable them to prosecute and carry on the great and glorious work, to which they had been appointed by their Lord and Master, before he left them. And when they gave thanks, or performed any acts of worship, they always addressed God the Father, and paid all their religious devotions to him *only*.

Another strong negative proof against the personality and divinity of the Holy Spirit is the fact, that *it* was never considered or worshipped by the Jews as God, or a person of Deity; indeed, nowhere in the Old Testament is it even personified. Nor is the term, Holy Spirit, used in the Old Testament, I believe, more than three times. But the spirit of God, the breath of his mouth, and the spirit of his mouth, which mean the same, are often used, and are always understood to mean his power, or influence, or some emanation from him. We find no expression of Moses, of David, or of any of the prophets, which gives any intimation of the distinct personality, or divinity of the spirit; or that worship should be rendered to it. All the worship we have any account of was paid to that Being, who said, "I alone am God, and there is none besides me." And when we examine the New Testament, we cannot there find a single express declaration, that the holy spirit is a distinct person of Deity, or that we should worship it as God. But we find that Christ and his apostles, not only in words, but in prac-

tice, disapproved of such worship; for they never did pray to, or worship the spirit as God. And if we were to judge professed *Trinitarians*, by their practice, by their devotions, their prayers, and praises, we should conclude that *they* do not, *in fact*, consider the Holy Spirit as God, or a person of Deity, or by any means equal, and praiseworthy with the Father; nor even a thousandth part equal; for they seldom (if ever) pray to, or address the Spirit as they do the Father. In their solemn devotions they devoutly invoke the Father Almighty, whom Christ pronounced "the only true God." And herein they are truly, practically, Unitarians, and imitators of their Lord and Master. It is generally supposed, that the most pious ministers of the Gospel *preach* better than they practice. But it appears to me that *many*, if not all Trinitarian ministers, *practise* better than they *preach*. For this I love them. And I sincerely pray that their practice may amend their preaching: and not, that their preaching should change their practice. But to return.

All the expressions in the Bible relating to the spirit of God, if we except the discourse alluded to in John, must mean or refer to God himself, his essence in action, his power, or influence, or some of his attributes. They cannot be applicable to a person of God. Take such expressions as the following,—“I will *pour* out of my spirit,—shed forth his spirit,—sprinkling of the spirit, which the Father will send in my name,—baptized with the holy spirit,—spirit fell upon them,—given without measure,—the residue of the spirit; and many other such like expressions might be given, all of which are appropriate to the power, influence, or attributes of God; but would be totally inconsistent, if not ridiculous, if applied to the almighty God, or a Divine person. Who could conceive such ideas as pouring out God! (for it is said the spirit is God) shedding forth the Almighty,—using him like water for sprinkling,—of his being given without measure,—there being a residue of God,—but it is too painful to think of such inconsistent ideas. I forbear. Such expressions cannot be applicable to the Supreme God; therefore the Holy Spirit cannot be that God.

There are other circumstantial proofs, reasons, and arguments, conclusive against the personality and Deity of the Holy Spirit. We find from the Scriptures, that an ineffa-

ble, mutual love subsisted, and undoubtedly always will subsist, between the Father and his Son. The Father not only loved, but honored the Son. He exalted him at his own right hand on the throne. He glorified him. It is "the Father that glorifieth me," said the Son. The Father himself proclaimed to his Son, in a voice from heaven, "I have glorified thee, and will glorify thee again." And the Son also loved and honored the Father. All that he ever did was for the glory of God the Father. And we are commanded to honor and love the Father, who first loved us. But there is no passage in the Bible expressive of any love of God the Father to the holy spirit, or of honor or glory given it by the Father. Nor is there any evidence that the Holy Spirit loved the Father, and honored and glorified him. Neither is there any evidence that there was a mutual love subsisting, and ever to subsist, between the Son and Spirit. Nor are we anywhere in the Bible commanded to love and honor the Holy Spirit. Christ, indeed, taught that men should honor the *Son* as they honor the Father; and the Father himself directed that the angels, on a certain occasion, all the angels of God should worship, or honor him. But not a single direction or intimation can be found in the Bible, that men or angels should either love, honor, or worship the Holy Spirit. The Almighty, several times, in a voice from heaven, proclaimed concerning the Son, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I well pleased;" or "hear ye him." But no such proclamation was ever made respecting the Holy Spirit. No voice from heaven was ever heard, saying, this is my *beloved Spirit*, in whom I am well pleased, or this is *my Holy Spirit*, hear ye him. And why were not all things done and required respecting the Holy Spirit, that were respecting the Son, or even the Father? If the Holy Spirit were God, or a person of Deity, coequal in all respect with the Father, and also with the Son, can any reason be assigned why the Spirit should not receive from the Father as much love as the Son, his coequal; and that a similar proclamation thereof should not have been made, and a like voice from heaven heard? Can it be because the mode of their existence or derivation is said to be different? The Son, we are assured, was *begotten* of the Father, and it is said, the Holy Spirit *proceeded* from the Father. What the difference is, between begotten

and proceeded from, I will not undertake to determine ; it is a matter above my weak capacity. But I should think that they, who hold that both persons are equal, (if both are persons,) would not believe that the *difference* between the two *equal* persons could be *so* great, that one would receive of the Father the most ineffable love, while the other would get no love at all ; that one should be honored and glorified, and the other not even recognised, as an intelligent being ! Would this be consistent with the character of that perfectly just Being, who “ is no respecter of persons ? ” But, to me, it does not appear strange, that no love or honor of the spirit is expressed towards the Father, or the Son, or angels, or men, or that angels and men are not required to love and honor the holy spirit ; because, to me it is evident, that the holy spirit is not a person, is not an intelligent being, capable either of bestowing or receiving love or honor ; but is only the power of God, is but a gift ; and gifts cannot love, or receive love ; all the love is from the giver, and not from the gift ; and upon the giver, and not the gift, should all the love be bestowed. Yet these circumstances are consistent with the nature of God, for he cannot love his own spirit, because his love is not selfish, it is universal benevolence. But though the spirit is not, as a person, to be loved, honored, or worshipped, yet as the power, as the gift of God, made by him effectual to the sanctification, consolation, and salvation of men, it is of such inestimable value, as to entitle the *Giver* (not the gift) to our highest love, gratitude, and praise, forever and ever !

Again, it may be observed, when John, in the Isle of Patmos, had glorious visions of heavenly things he describes, in glowing, sublime, and rapturous language, the worship, the honors, and glories given to the ever living God, the Father who sat upon the throne ; he also represents Christ, “ the Lamb, that was slain,” as being considered “ worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and honor, and glory, and blessing ! ” But not one expression of praise, or honor, or glory, or worship is ascribed to the Holy Spirit ! It does not appear, (for it could not,) that John ever saw him (or it) “ on the throne, or in the midst of the throne, or round about the throne,” or anywhere in heaven. And if he were God, or a person of Deity, where was he ? And why were not honors and praises ascribed to him, as well



as to the Father and Son, who are said to be no more than his equals? The only answer that can be given is, that the holy spirit is *not* the *adorable God*, is not a person at all, but is the power, the divine gift of God; and all the praise, all the honor, all the glory, are due to the benevolent, glorious *Giver*, and not to the *gift* or power given.

It is true John speaks of the seven spirits of God before the throne, and of the seven lamps of fire burning, which are the seven spirits of God, and of the seven horns and seven eyes, which are also the seven spirits of God; but these spirits cannot be considered as the one personal Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. If there is anything personal, in this case, there must be seven persons, and that would be half a dozen too many for even trinitarian purposes. Another circumstance worthy of high consideration is, that the holy spirit is not even mentioned, together, or in connexion, or in company with the Father and Son, more than four times, I believe, in the whole Bible, including 1 John v. 7, which should be excluded, as spurious. Paul never thus mentions it but once in all his epistles; neither does Christ so connect it but once; so likewise Peter. Paul frequently (I have noticed more than thirty times) in his epistles, speaks of the Father and Son together. But he always prayed and gave thanks to God the Father only. Now, if the Holy Spirit were God, or a person equal with the Father, is it morally possible, that Paul could have thus neglected him, could thus by omission have treated him with contempt? And is it not proof beyond a doubt, that Paul did not so consider the Holy Spirit? If witnesses of high reputation should testify of two distinguished persons on earth, naming them together, at all times, and as apparently connected and seemingly equal in worth and dignity; but should never speak of another, or third person, as fully equal with, and like either of the two, or as being in connexion or in company with them; could any one, from such testimony, believe that there was any such third person in existence? Surely not. Because no reason could be assigned, why he should not have been mentioned as well and often, and with as much praise, as the other two, if had been in existence, and with them. And the proof relative to heavenly beings stands upon the same principle, as that relating to earthly. We often judge of unseen things,

by those that are seen. "The invisible things of God," Paul said, "are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." Besides, would it not appear very degrading to the Spirit, *if* a person of Deity, to be spoken of as it usually is, as an attribute, the property, the hand, finger, breath, or the mouth, or power of God, as a thing entirely under the control and direction of another person, and not considered as a distinct object of love or honor; and not addressed in prayer, either by the Son of God, or by his apostles?

Furthermore, it may be argued, I think, with irresistible force, that all the acts (and it is said, "actions speak louder than words,") of all professing Christians, of every denomination, from the days of the Apostles to the present time, show that they never really and practically believed, that the Holy Spirit is very God, or a person of Deity equal with the Father, or a person that should be worshipped and addressed in prayer, as much, and constantly as the Father. For they never have, so frequently and in like manner, prayed to the Holy Spirit, as they have to the Father. None of the forms of prayer, prepared even by Trinitarians, and used for public and private worship, commence with an address to the Holy Spirit. I recollect but one instance in all the highly devotional prayers of the Church of England, where the Holy Spirit is addressed at the commencement. It is true they do, in their Litany and other parts of their worship, sometimes introduce the Holy Spirit as a third object of worship, but never as the only one, or first, as they do the Father. And thus Christians of all sects have, and still do, *practically* deny the Deity and equality of the Holy Spirit; certain strange, inconsistent creeds, catechisms, and ecclesiastical canons to the contrary notwithstanding. What stronger evidence can there be than deeds performed? A certain lord of a vineyard said to his servants, go into the vineyard, &c.; one said to his lord, I go, and went not; and another said, I go not, but went. Was not the actually going better evidence of obedience to his lord's command, than a promise to go, and not going? If a man professes ever so much, that he believes a thing, while all that he does is contradictory thereto. "that man's faith is vain." Many of the strange creeds, I believe, are creeds of words only, and as Paul said of faith without works, dead. Which,

then, shall we rely upon, the dead, uncertain creeds of men, or their living, truth-telling acts ?

Lest it might be thought, that I am not disposed to bring forward all the texts that have ever been considered favorable to the personality of the Holy Spirit, I will here notice two, which by some have been thought proof in point. They are Matthew xxviii. 19, and 2 Cor. xiii. 14. Matthew has recorded that, Christ a little before his ascension said to his disciples, "Go ye, therefore, teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father" &c. This verse is a sequitur from the preceding one, "And Jesus coming spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto me, in heaven and in earth." I have power given unto me of my Father, to direct your future course, how you are to preach my Gospel, to teach my doctrines, and to administer my ordinances. And in virtue of that power, I direct you, "Go ye *therefore*, teach all nations," &c. From this connexion it is evident, that the authority to baptize was not given by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but by Christ himself, as the messenger sent from the Father. The Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit had reference to the end and object of the institution, which was designed as a memorial or pledge of believers, of their faith in God the Father almighty, to whom supreme worship is due; and in his Son, the only Mediator and constituted Saviour; and in the spirit of God, as his influential power and agent to sanctify, comfort, and establish the hearts of Christian converts. This affords no evidence of the Deity, equality, or personality of the holy spirit; but the terms necessarily imply the contrary. The *spirit* of God (which is synonymous with the holy spirit) cannot be a distinct person from God, nor any person whatever. Or if it were a person, it could not be a person, according to trinitarian views, equal in every respect with the Father, because it is acknowledged, that it proceeded from the Father, therefore cannot be self-existent; that it is sent by the Father, poured out by the Father, given, shed abroad, and communicated by the Father, in every respect submissive to his will and pleasure, therefore, it cannot be independent and almighty.

The argument, that the Holy Spirit must be a person, and even an equal person with the Father, because it is coupled with the Father and the Son, is not only a weak argument, but

a dangerous one to be used ; for if it can prove anything, it may prove *everything* almost. If coupling a thing to a personal being, would make that thing a person, the copulative conjunction, *and*, might produce an innumerable number of persons. But this argument is too weak to require a serious answer, or refutation ; it carries in itself its own destruction.

I have already (see page 124) taken some notice of the 2d Cor. xiii. 14. I will here observe, that the expression, “the communion of the Holy Spirit,” does not necessarily imply any personality in the spirit. We read of the “communion of the blood of Christ;” but no one considers blood a person. And we speak of “the communion of the Lord’s supper,” and of “the table of the Lord,” but it was never thought, that supper and table are real persons. But if the Holy Spirit were a person, the third person, to make up the Trinitarian number, the text clearly disproves the supposed unity ; for the three are spoken of as distinctly, and differently, as any three persons ever were. A different thing or property is attributed to each ; to one grace, to another love, and to the third communion. Now if the learned St. Paul had believed in this strange trinity in unity, and it had been revealed to him, that it would perplex the church of Christ, for fifteen hundred years, I think he would have written more plainly, clearly, and concisely ; that he would have expressed himself in strict Trinitarian dialect, and said, “The grace, love, and communion of the *Triune God* be with you all. This would have established the doctrine, and saved the writing of ten words ; quite a saving, in epistolary writing, when the art of printing had not been invented.

But perhaps I have already enlarged upon this point more than was necessary, as it is so manifest, and as Trinitarians generally have not labored much to support this part of the doctrine, but have apparently left the third person, as it were, to take care of itself, seeming to think that if they made out two persons, the third would follow of course, that if there were *certainly* two, there must *surely* be three. This is as strange an idea, as the doctrine itself. It is an established, acknowledge axiom, that the lesser is included in the greater. But neither man nor God ever did, or can establish an axiom, that the greater must be contained in the lesser, for that would be contrary to those laws of nature,

which God has ordained, and which are immutable. No one seriously believes that trinity can be made out of duality; nor *a fortiori* out of unity. If then the supposed third person of Deity cannot be supported by the Bible, nor by fair and reasonable arguments, the whole doctrine of the Trinity must be prostrated; for, as I have before observed, it is like a temple set upon three pillars, if one of which is not substantial, but a mere pillar of straw, the temple itself, like a certain "house built upon sand, must fall," and "great," in effect upon the religious world, "must be the fall thereof."

If I have now shown from Scripture, as well as from reason, that the holy spirit cannot be God, or a person of Deity, according to Trinitarian views; and if also I have demonstrated, that the Son also cannot be so, (though I intend to produce some further proof and arguments respecting the Son,) it must be acknowledged, that the Trinitarian doctrine is not proved, but is fully disproved. Still, however, lest there should be a particle of doubt remaining, I shall further consider the Father, the first, or, as we say, the only person of Deity, and show from the Bible, and from everything we know, that He alone, is the self-existent, only almighty God, the *only* person of Deity; and therefore, that there cannot be a *Trinity* of persons.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE FATHER, THE FIRST, OR ONLY PERSON OF DEITY CONSIDERED.

It is agreed by all, that personality is applicable to the Father. But some say, that the Father is the first person only; while others say, he is the only person of God, exclusively so. And I say, let "the Judge of the earth" decide this important question; let it be settled by his testimony, by his solemn proclamations, which are registered in the holy book of God. To these we appeal, and the decision must be final, for there is no higher tribunal in earth or heaven.

It is most evident, that the term Father, when used in the Bible, in reference to the Supreme Being, is always synonymous with God Almighty, who has, by his prophets and otherwise, repeatedly proclaimed, "I alone am God, and there is none besides me." "I am God, and there is none else." "There is no God with me." "Thou shalt worship no other God." The Old Testament is full of such declarations. And in the New Testament, Christ and his Apostles often declared that there is but one God, the Father, and that the Father is "the only true God." The instances in both Testaments are too numerous to be here quoted. I will give a general statement from Grundy's lectures. He says, "Those passages in the New Testament, in which the Father is styled one, or only God, are, in number seventeen. Those passages where he is styled God absolutely, by way of eminence and supremacy, are, in number, three hundred and twenty. Those passages where he is styled God, with peculiarly high titles and epithets, or attributes, are a hundred and five.

“ Those passages where it is declared, that all prayers and praises ought to be rendered to him, and that every thing ought to be ultimately directed to his honor and glory, are, in number, ninety. Passages wherein the Son is declared positively and by the clearest implication, to be subordinate to the Father, deriving his being from him, receiving from him his divine powers, and acting in all things, wholly according to the will of the Father, are, in number, above three hundred.

“ Of thirteen hundred passages in the New Testament, wherein the word *God* is mentioned, not one of them necessarily implies a plurality of persons. To which may be added about two thousand passages in the Old Testament, in which the Unity is either positively expressed, or evidently implied. In nearly all these passages it is expressly declared, or necessarily implied, that God is one, and that the Father is God, ‘ the only true God.’ ” Need we further evidence? If so, we may obtain it. I will state another kind of proof, which I call strong negative and practical evidence. It is nowhere said, in the Bible, that there are three persons in the one God, or that Jehovah is one God in three persons, or anything to that amount; nothing but the unity of God there appears. Therefore, if we must believe such unrevealed doctrine, or “ perish everlastingly,” as the Trinitarian creed asserts, then we must conclude, that “ the only true God ” has given a false account of himself,—of his nature and being,—and that his holy prophets, his “ beloved Son, in whom he was ever well pleased,” and his Apostles have not told the truth, the whole truth. Faith in the Trinity demands such a conclusion; it is unavoidable. And it is a serious solemn, aspect of things. What! must the truth of the Apostles the Son of God, and the Father Omnipotent be called in question, rather than that an unscriptural doctrine, the invention of men, should be disbelieved, or even doubted? If there be any truth in the Gospel,—if there is any holiness in the doctrines of Christ,—if the word of God is “ worthy of all acceptance,”—“ think of these things!”

Again; in the passages referred to, we find no evidence of plurality of any kind in the being or nature of God, either of persons’ “ hypostases, subsistences, inadequate conceptions, primalities, differences, distinctions, diversities, or somewhats.” These strange expressions have no residence

in the Bible. We might, therefore, well inquire of each of them, in the language used by Job, "Whence comest thou?" And what must be the answer?

Again; we are not commanded, in the Bible, to pay supreme worship to any being, but the Father Almighty, whom Christ himself worshipped, and to whom he always prayed, and directed his disciples so to do. And it appears by Paul's epistles, that *he* always rendered thanks and praises to God the Father only; never to the Son, and Holy Spirit, or the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, all together, or to any, *then* unconceived of, triune God. And although, since that time, men have invented creeds, catechisms, and litanies, inconsistent with the word of God, and have almost forced them into acceptance, yet Christians of all ages and denominations have been inclined to obey the word of God, rather than the decrees of men;—for they have generally prayed to the Father alone, "the only true God,"—have thanked him for the mission of his Son, and the gift of his Spirit;—they have never thanked the Son for coming, nor the Spirit for giving himself, as if each were an independent person, or God. The Son himself has clearly shown, that the Father, exclusively, is the only God, of all power, in one person; for he repeatedly said, that all power and authority were given him by his *Father*, not by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit;—by the one only person, and not by three persons. He also said, that the doctrine he taught was not his, but the *Father's*; he did not say it was the doctrine of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He said that he *lived* by the *Father*, and not by the three persons; that he was sent by the *Father*, and not by the Father and two other persons. In short, he represented, and the whole Bible represents, that the Father is the only person, the only God of original power, who alone, and with one or two other persons, established, and governs, and sustains all the affairs of the universe, according to his own will, and by agents, instruments, and means, of his own appointment. Whatever is done by the Son, or holy spirit, is done through the power of the Father Almighty enabling them, and whatever is done by the Father, is done by his own undervived power. In this, there is no mystery; it is express revelation; it is plain reason and common sense. There is no expression in the Bible, which proves that anything was



ever done, that any authority was ever exercised by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together; all original power is represented to be in the Father, who is acknowledged to be a person, at least (whether he is the *only* person, or the first person *only*, is the *only* question made,) therefore the other two persons (if there be two more) can have no undeived power at all; for if all is in the first, all, or even any, cannot be in the second, or third, unless it is given by the first

It may be further observed, that when God the Father is represented as speaking, he always speaks in the singular number. He says, "I, my, me," and not we, us, our, excepting in three or four instances, which I have fully explained. And the singular number is uniformly used by the prophets, by Christ and his Apostles, when they name the Almighty.—"The Lord our God is one Lord;" "the only true God;" "to us there is but one God, the Father." Now is not the evidence we have produced from the Bible sufficient to show, that there is not any kind of plurality in Deity, either of persons, or anything else?

But, if we can find no evidence of any kind of plurality of God in his word, shall we go to his works for it? Indeed, it is not there; these all proclaim the entire unity of their Creator. If we view with amazement the wonderful and glorious orb of light and heat, the constituted controller and director of our planetary system, can we find anything plural in the sun? Do we behold a trinity of suns, each of the three equal in power and magnitude, but all so mysteriously joined together as to make but one sun? When, in a calm and cloudless night, we behold, with delight and wonder, the moon and all the stars of heaven shining above and around us, can we see any plurality in the constitution of any of them? Does any trinity of form appear in any of them! Come then to the animal creation. Consider our own species. Is there anything plural in the nature of a single man? Can there be three "somewhats" in him. Can there be, in any one man, a trinity of body, a trinity of intellect, a trinity of head to contain it, or a trinity of soul to be saved? In fine, if we look through all the works of creation, from the lowest to the highest, can we find therein any token or indication of any kind of plurality in the being or person of the Creator and Father of the universe?

And herein nature reason, and common sense agree with the Holy Scriptures ; as I contend they always do. But upon this point, especially, they, and the Bible, all

“ Firm concord hold—men only disagree.”

The idea of one God and Father of the universe, existing in one person, one undivided nature, possessing originally all power, the gracious, wise, supreme Governor and Director of all events, is calculated to lead the mind to the most exalted, sublime contemplations, to meliorate the affections, to warm the heart, to lift the soul to heaven, to diffuse light and joy throughout the world, and to display the whole universe as a perfect system of one all perfect God ! While the doctrine of the Trinity, as usually taught, tends to distract the mind, to chill the heart, to confound the understanding, to cast a gloom over the rational joys of earth, to blast the hopes of heaven, to make the worship of God a mystery, and his holy word a book of riddles ! I make these remarks, not to wound the feelings of any one, but because I believe they are supported by the testimony of the Bible, and the dictates of reason and common sense.

If then, it appears from the Bible, and from nature and reason, that the Father is, exclusively, the only God, in one person only, and that neither the Son, nor Spirit can be an equal person with the Father, it would seem that Trinitarians must adopt one of two courses ; that they must either change or alter their creeds and catechisms, so as to conform them to the Scriptures, and the laws of nature, or improve and correct the Bible, and vary the order of the universe, so as to support their doctrine. “ How long will ye halt between two opinions ? ” If the Scriptures be true, abide by them ; if the Trinitarian doctrine, abide by that. It is time that this important question should be understood and settled. The minds of men have already been too long under a kind of ecclesiastical tyranny, as effectual as physical force. The light of the Gospel has for ages been eclipsed by the opaque creeds of men. Soon after the days of the apostles, the word of God was enveloped in Platonic darkness, which was succeeded by monkish superstition, and by absurd, unscriptural hypotheses of

human invention, which remain, in part, to this day. O, may the true unclouded light of the Gospel soon fully illuminate the whole world!

## CHAPTER XV.

### FURTHER REMARKS RESPECTING THE SON OF GOD.

I HAVE already noticed most of the passages that have been considered as proof texts of the Divinity of Christ. I have given time for the candid and unprejudiced to judge, whether they furnish good and satisfactory evidence of the doctrine, or whether they fully disprove it. It is now my design to consider some of the hypotheses, suppositions, and allegations of its advocates, which are not expressly, if at all, taught in the Bible, and to notice some of the arguments that are used to support them.

One of the most important and extraordinary of these suppositions is, that Christ, the Son of God, has two natures, though he is but one person, one Christ; that is, "both God and man, very God and very man." This undoubtedly is an invention, thought to be necessary for the better and more easy management of a large number of obstinate texts of Scripture, which clearly and expressly prove, that the *Son*, of God, is *not* God; that he cannot be the self-existent, independent, almighty, ever-living God himself, *that God* whose Son he is, that he cannot be his own Father.

It will be necessary to examine this matter fully and critically; because it is granted, by all Trinitarians, that if the doctrine of the two natures in Christ is not true, his Deity cannot be supported, and of course the Trinity must fail. Because Christ, fully, expressly, and constantly declared, that he had no power of himself, but that all power and authority were given him of his Father; that the works he did, and the words he spoke were not his, but the Father's who sent him: that he lived by the Father; and many such ex-

pressions, which clearly prove that he could not be the supreme God, if he spoke of himself as God; therefore it was necessary to invent a strange kind of human nature, to which all Christ's expressions and acts might be applied, which did not appear consistent with Deity. And if Christ could have two natures, his words and works might very conveniently be referred to either, as might best suit sectarian views, or conform to creeds, catechisms, or ecclesiastical decrees; the application must be entirely arbitrary; for Christ himself never gave any intimation in *which* nature he spoke, as he must have done, if he had had two speaking natures.

But, before I proceed to consider the evidence relative to this hypothesis, I must observe, that it appears to me to be at least a very foolish invention, because it cannot answer the purpose for which it was designed; it must weaken, in some respects, the cause it was intended to support; it must disprove the supposed equality between the Son and Father. For if the Son of God is man, and mediator too between them, while the Father is only God, he cannot be said to be *equal*, for he would be superior; he would be more than the Father. Christ therefore instead of saying, "my Father is greater than I," would have said, I am greater, I am more than my Father, by the addition of man and mediator to me, which the Father has not. Again, if all power was given to the Son, in his human nature, as Trinitarians assert, and he, as God, possessed all originally, he must have twice as much as the Father almighty. And besides, it indirectly accuses the allwise God of folly; for if the Son, as God, had all power, it must have been unnecessary, (if it was possible to give what was already possessed,) it must have been folly for the Father to give him, in his human nature, what he before had, originally, in his other nature, to which, as it is said, he was indissolubly united. Again, if we believe that the Son was the omniscient God, as well as man, we must believe that on a certain occasion he told a falsehood. For he said, "Of that day and that hour knoweth no one, no, not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only;" whereas, If he was God, he did know, and therefore knowingly declared what was not true. And must the Son of the only true God be made a liar, to establish the truth of trinitarian hypotheses? It is a solemn consideration. The

supposition, that "Christ spoke in his *human nature*," is a miserable explanation. It is inconsistent with nature, as well as the word of God. Whoever conceived the idea, that any being speaks in his nature, or a part of his nature? Flesh and blood are a part of the nature of man. Does he speak in flesh and blood? Or is it the whole man, or person, all that he is that speaks? The disciples did not request Christ as a human being, seperately considered, to give them information "of that day," &c.; but they desired him, as the Christ, (which comprehended all his nature or natures, and everything that he was,) as their Lord and Master, to inform them, &c. And if he did not tell them all he knew, in any way whatever, he was a deceiver, as much as Ananias and Sapphira were, when they said they sold the land "for so much," without saying expressly that they did not sell it for more, which Peter called lying. Will any one accuse Christ of withholding the truth, of prevaricating with his disciples, which is as odious as positive falsehood! Such unholy conclusions must follow from the unscriptural hypotheses of two natures in Christ.

But what evidence is there to support this strange allegation? There is certainly none in the Bible. It is nowhere there said, that Christ has two natures: that he is God and man; that he possesses, originally, unlimited power, and yet that his power is limited, and that he has not any at all, when at the same time he has the whole; that he is independent, though he lives by the Father. Such contradictory expressions are not found in the word of God; and nothing therein can be construed into such a meaning, for God cannot contradict himself, in any way. The whole language of the Bible is, that Christ was the Son of God, as Peter said, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of God." Christ did not correct Peter, and tell him that besides being the Son of God, he was very God himself, and very man also; but he implicitly declared to him, that his opinion was correct; for he says it was revealed to him by his Father in heaven; therefore it must be correct; for it is impossible that God the Father could reveal anything that is not true. The supposition of two natures in Christ, therefore appears to be as "baseless as the fabric of a vision."

It is a strange hypotheses, that there are three persons in Deity, who have but one nature, and yet that one of the three

persons, the second, has alone two natures, twice as much as the *whole three*! Strange axiom! I do not understand such arithmetic—such axioms. Yet this is the doctrine of modern orthodoxy. But it is not the doctrine of the Bible. And shall we say, then, that the written revelation of God is imperfect; that it does not furnish us with all we ought to know, so we will look to his other agents or instruments of revelation, to nature, reason, and common sense? But we shall find that these all harmonize with the Bible on this point; they all implicitly declare that no one being *can* have more than one nature;—like the Bible, they furnish no evidence of any being in the universe, that has two natures.—Let me here ask, what is the meaning of the expression, the nature of a being? It must certainly comprehend and include all the qualities, all the properties, everything that in any way pertains to that being. Consider man. It is in the nature of man, that he should have eyes, ears, arms, feet, a tongue, a head, intellectual powers, and other properties; but shall we argue that every one of these is a distinct nature in man, and so make him to have thirty (or more) natures, while he is constituted but one person or being? And if we should reverently ascend to a contemplation of the supreme Being, shall we say that all his qualities, all his attributes, his eternal existence, his omniscience, his almighty power, and his other perfect attributes are all of them distinct natures in Deity? No, all agree that God has only one perfect nature; and it is impossible that he can have more, for there is nothing like him, or like his nature. And can any other being possess more than the Almighty himself can? The idea of two natures in one being is *unnatural*; is directly *contrary* to nature, to reason, and the word of God; it is absurd; it is absolutely impossible. For the nature of a being is all that constitutes that being what he is; it is, in fact, the whole being himself. To say of a being, that he has a double nature would be the same as to say, that he is a double individual.

But what is most incredible respecting the two natures in Christ is, that the natures are infinitely different from, and opposite to each other; that Christ is omnipotent, and that he is impotent and limited in his power; that he is omniscient, and that he is ignorant of some future events; that he is the infinite God, and that he is a mere man, a finite be-

ing. Such natures, like fire and water, cannot exist together ; one must destroy the other. If Christ is the infinite, unchangeable God, he cannot be a mere man ; and vice versa. This is such a self-evident proposition, that it seems to me no unprejudiced person, of even common sense, can deny it.

Now with regard to the apology of Trinitarians, (if I may so call it,) for inventing this key of interpretation, as it is called, which is said to be necessary in order to reconcile Scripture with Scripture ; I must observe, that there is no such key to be found in the machinery of the Bible ; nothing like it ; it is of human invention ; and besides it will not fit any of the locks, wards, or doctrines of the Scriptures. This key may be described, the double nature of Christ, or Christ very God, the supreme God, and very man, truly, or merely man. Such a key will not fit any locks in the Bible, will not turn any of its wards, will not display any of its mysterious doctrines. It is a clear doctrine of the Bible, that God is unchangeable. This doctrine is totally destroyed by such a key ; since, for the immutable God to become man would not only be a change, but an *infinite change* ! A cessation of his invariable Being ! Again, it is a doctrine of the Bible, that Christ was humbled, or permitted to humble himself. But the doctrine is not made to appear by this key ; for *as* God, he could not be humbled, or humble himself ; and *as* man he could not ; for, as to his humanity, he was, at first, as humble as possible ; he was born in a manger, and his whole life was an invariable state of humiliation and suffering. The Assembly's Catechism (so called) says, "Christ's humiliation consists in his being born, and that in a low condition," &c., therefore he could not have been humbled before he was born, and so could not be the invariable God. In truth, there can be no such thing as humiliation in Christ, according to this key of interpretation.

Again, it is an acknowledged doctrine of Scripture, that God appointed and sent his Son to be the spiritual mediator, the only all-sufficient mediator between God and man, and to die to secure man's salvation. But this key will not admit of this precious doctrine ; for God could not be sent, could not die, could not be a mediator *between* himself and men. And as man only, Christ would not be a sufficient mediator ; he would so be no better than Moses, or Paul, or



any good man. Besides *as* man he could not be a mediator between man and God; for according to the nature of things, a mediator (*μεσιτης*) must be one between the two parties, and not one of either. I cannot conceive, therefore, that there is the least foundation in the Bible for such a key of interpretation. But if my good and pious (for there can be no doubt of their piety, whatever there be of their doctrines,) Trinitarian friends will permit me, I will mention a perfect key, one made by the supreme Architect of the universe, which will fit all the locks of the Bible, turn all its seemingly intricate wards, and lay open to view all its precious and glorious doctrines. This key is no less than the only begotten, glorious Son of God, turned by the power of his testimony, and the perfect example of his life. This key (Christ) being begotten, or created, or his existence being caused, by the Father almighty, the Father has power, and a right to alter, change, or humiliate him, according to his own pleasure, and the necessities of sinful men; he could humiliate him from the form or likeness of God, to the form of a servant, or the likeness of men; he could permit that he should suffer and die, especially with his own willingness, that men might live; he might consistently appoint him sole mediator between himself and men; all this he might do, without violating the laws of his immutability and immortality, or in any respect varying his nature or attributes. I would therefore propose to candid orthodox Christians an amendment to their hypothesis of a double nature in Christ, so that it may read, that Christ has but one nature, which is strickly, neither God nor man, but between them; transcendently above man, and vastly below Deity; that this one nature comprehends all that pertains to Christ; that no being, not even the Almighty can have more than one nature, one perfect nature. This, I think, would meet the approbation of all rational Christians; as it would be consistent with the Bible, and not contrary to the laws of nature. There is no inconsistency in the nature of the case, that the Son, in his infancy, should appear as weak and imperfect, in his mind or intellect, as in his body. He was designed to fulfil an important character, to act a great part, if I may so speak; he was to be raised up as, or like, one of the prophets; he was to be the mediator in human appearance. And, that his character might appear natural,

God might withhold from him, or suspend for a time, his great intellectual powers, and recommunicate them to him, or increase them, as he saw fit, proper, and necessary for his official duties. We know that God often sees fit to alter the condition of men, both as to their minds, and their bodies, sometimes suspending their rational powers, for a time, in part, or altogether. So when God sent his Son into the world on the greatest embassy that ever was sent, in his great wisdom he undoubtedly would withhold from or communicate to him just so much intelligence and power as were necessary and proper, for the purpose of effecting the object of the mission. The true character of Christ, the only Son of God, is, I think, the only key necessary for a full and correct interpretation of the Scriptures.

We will here notice another assumption or hypothesis, equally unscriptural and irrational, which is considered necessary to the support of the Deity of the Son, and also of the Holy Spirit, viz., that the word *person*, when applied theologically, has some kind of meaning (no one can tell what) different from the common meaning of the term. Trinitarians say, that the three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, mean one God; yet they acknowledge, that to say, that the three persons are one person, or that three beings are one being, would be a contradiction, and could not be believed. Therefore they find it necessary to assume that the word *person*, which they themselves apply to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, does not mean *person*, or *being*; but that it has a *technical* meaning. But to find out what that technical meaning is, they have perplexed and puzzled themselves for centuries, without satisfaction, till the most learned and candid have freely acknowledged, that they cannot describe, or conceive what it is.

I do not deny, that words may have an uncommon or technical meaning; but that meaning is always as well defined, known, and understood, as the common. The word *person* has such meaning in dramatic writings. The meaning of *Dramatis Personæ* is as well understood, as the persons of men; it is the characters of the drama. The performers are not, in fact, the persons whose names they assume, they only endeavor to represent them, as if real, which is well understood. It would be most ridiculous to say, that any

term had an uncommon or technical meaning, when we cannot describe or conceive what that meaning is; for how can we determine whether it is common or technical, if we cannot conceive what it is? Can we know more than we can conceive, or more than we *can* know? The knowledge of the technical meaning of a word is the parent of that meaning, it cannot exist without it. Therefore as no one knows the supposed technical meaning of the word *person*, in theology, it must be concluded, that there is none; so the term must stand upon its common sense, when applied theologically, as well as otherwise.

There is not a single instance in the Bible where the word *person* is used, (and it is used very frequently,) but it must, clearly, have its common meaning. Neither can there be found in the Bible any such expressions, as three persons in one God, or the first, or second, or third person of the Trinity. No such idea was ever conceived, by any one, till, at least three or four hundred years after the preaching and writings of the Apostles. There is therefore no authority in the Bible, for giving any meaning to the word *person*, but its common meaning. And if we regard the dictates of nature and reason, we can have no doubts. If a Rev. Doctor informs me, that he has three hundred persons in his church, I know that he means, that he has three hundred members (men and women) in his church; I cannot believe that he has but one hundred members, and that each member has three persons, which would in the whole, make up three hundred persons. This would be, at least, ridiculous; for we know, beyond, doubt, that a person is a man, or some higher intelligent being. one person must be one intelligent being only, neither more nor less. One man is one person; and one God must be one great and glorious Person or Being; he cannot be three, any more than he can be a million. Person and an intelligent being must be synonymous.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE TRINITARIAN CREEDS, CATECHISMS, CONFESSIONS, AND ECCLESIASTICAL DECREES CONSIDERED.

We have already considered most of the texts relied on for proof of the doctrine of the Trinity; and we think that they all, and each of them, not only fail to support the doctrine, but actually disprove and overthrow it. We will now attempt to show, that all the creeds, catechisms, confessions, and decrees of ecclesiastical councils, since the Apostles wrote, if fully considered, must have the same effect.

It is unfortunate for the cause of Christian truth, that most of the writings of Heggesippus, a learned Jewish convert, who wrote a continuation of the history of the affairs of the church, from the time of the Acts of the Apostles by Luke, have been lost. Whether they were destroyed by the monks or friars in the dark ages, or otherwise, is not material for our consideration. There have been various conjectures on the subject. From all the evidence we can collect, it is evident they contain nothing of a trinitarian aspect.

For a century after the time of the Apostles, we find very little written by the early fathers, concerning the faith or practice of the Christian church. About the close of the first century, Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, gained some distinction as a writer. Among his writings may be found this expression? "there is one God, who revealed himself by Jesus Christ, his Son, who is his eternal Logos, not proceeding from silence." This passage shows, that Ignatius was indoctrinated into the philosophy of Plato; but it affords not a shadow of evidence relative to the three equal persons of Deity; the strict unity of God being declared by him.

Justin Martyr, who had been a Heathen philosopher, wrote about the middle of the second century. From some of his writings, which we have already quoted, (page 100,) and from others also, it is evident that this Platonic Christian father adhered strongly to his philosophy; but there cannot be found in his writings any intimation of the doctrine of the Trinity, even so far as was established at the Council of Nice, or afterwards amended by other councils. He fully establishes the subordination of the Son, and takes no note of the Holy Spirit at all.

The first formal, general creed of the early fathers that I have found, is that of Irenæus, Bishop of Lyons, who wrote about the middle of the second century. (See the creed quoted page 100). In this we find a full display of the unity of God, and the subordination of the Son.

There is one part of this creed, that needs a little consideration; it is in these words, "so that to Jesus Christ, our Lord and God, and Saviour, and King, by the will of the invisible Father, every knee should bow," &c. Here the terms, Lord and God, are applied to Christ; but as the honor to be shown him was, by the will of the invisible Father, [God] Christ could not be that God or Father, who willed the honor to be done him; but the words Lord and God here must have been used, (as they often are,) in a restricted sense, and mean only a *divine* being, or the Son of God. Most of the early fathers (as we shall hereafter show) held that the Son was entitled to the *name* of God, not because he was the supreme God, but rather because he was *not so*; being only the Son (or God) of God. Let this creed be critically examined, and there cannot be found in it the least intimation of three coequal and coeternal persons of Deity according to modern Trinitarianism.

About the first of the third century, we have the creed of the learned Tertullian, presbyter, of Carthage. This creed (see it quoted in page 101) requires faith in the only omnipotent God, and in his Son Jesus Christ; no faith at all is required in the Holy Ghost, either as God, or as the third person, or any person whatever. But the unity and supremacy of God the Father, and the subordination of the Son are expressed, while trinity in unity cannot there be found; it was not then invented, or conceived.

The creed of the great and learned Origen, written about

the middle of the third century, [see it page 102,] sets forth the unity and supremacy of God the Father, and the subordination and dependence of the Son; and states that it was announced by the Apostles, that the Holy Spirit was associated with the Father and Son, in honor and dignity. But I cannot find any such annunciation in the Bible. From the whole creed, and other writings of Origen, it is evident that he did not believe in anything like the modern doctrine of three equal persons in one God. He said that the Son was "a divine being," but not "the divine Being;" that he was "a God, but not the self-existent God; that he was θεος (God) without the article, but not ο θεος (God) with the article, or αυτοθεος (God of himself) or the self-existent God." He says he believes Christ spoke the truth, when he said, "my Father is greater than I." In his treatise on prayer, he says, "If we understand what prayer is, it will appear that it never is to be offered to any originated being, not to Christ himself, but only to the God and Father of all, to whom our Saviour himself prayed, and taught us to pray." It is therefore certain that Origen did not consider Christ as the supreme God, or a being to be worshipped equally with the Father, as Trinitarians of this age profess to hold.

The decree of the first Council of Antioch was passed solely for the purpose of destroying Paul of Samosata, (for his supposed abominable heresy,) which it effected. And it must also overthrow itself, in the opinion of the candid, for it is self-contradictory. It resolves, that there is but one God the Father, unbegotten; and then it resolves that the begotten Son is God, making two Gods instead of one. The object of this council being, not to establish any Bible doctrine, but only to anathematize, and depose Paul; and not appearing to be influenced by the spirit of God, they have not even mentioned the Holy Spirit in any of their resolves. They seemed to be as much bent upon the destruction of Paul of Samosata, as the Jews that lay in wait were to kill Paul, the Apostle. This decree, as it is, and as it passed under such circumstances, I think, will not be urged as a supporter of *triunity*. The most that can be said of it is, that it recognises something like a *duality*, (of some sort or other, but not of equality,) but if so, can that amount to trinity? Can two be three?

The creed of Gregory of Niocæsarea [see page 103] fully

establishes the unity and supremacy of God the Father, and the subordination and entire dependence of the Son and Holy Spirit. And although it contains some expressions of a mystical, confused nature, it affords no evidence of the afterwards decreed doctrine of the Trinity.

I know not where to place the Apostles' creed, so called, as no one knows when it was written, or by whom. That it was written by the Apostles, or any of them, no one pretends; though it does not appear to me to be essentially at variance with the doctrines taught by them. As we now have it, it is, like many other creeds, a piece of patchwork; parts thereof having been made at different times, and for especial purposes. It is as follows: "I believe in God, (or as it is sometimes written in one, or one only, God,) the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived of the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, sitteth at the right hand of God the Father almighty, whence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy Catholic church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting."

The famous decree of the Council of Nice (in A. D. 325) has been considered as a full establishment of the doctrine of the Trinity. But, if it is considered fully, it will be found to be as different from the modern Trinitarian doctrine, as light is from darkness. [See this creed in full, page 104.] The whole foundation of the doctrine is annihilated by the first article of the creed. This creed begins, "We believe in one God, the Father almighty." The modern Trinitarian creed is, "We believe in one God, (consisting of,) the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; two as different Gods, as any two beings can be different one from another. And if the bishops of this council believed in the first one God the Father, they could not believe in the other one God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, without believing in two different almighty Gods. Let me state a case. I need an agent to transact some business. I employ John, the father; my neighbor also wants an agent, and he employs John the father, his son, and his brother. Now let me ask, do

we both employ the same identical person or agent? Like this, most of the ancient creeds, which are supposed to favor Trinitarianism, commence with an avowal of faith in one God, or only one God the Father. And as it is acknowledged that the Father is, at least, a person, therefore the Father must be not only the one only God, but also the one only person of God; so that there can be no other God or person of Deity but the Father. And Trinitarians who hold to the first article, by all the rules of evidence and argument, should thereby be stopped from contradicting their own creed and avowal, by saying, there are two other persons besides the Father, in whom they profess to believe; I say profess to believe, because they cannot *really* believe both. But if we disregard all rules and principles, and go afloat on the ocean of conjecture, what shall we find? Why, we shall be brought up with the second article of the creed, which establishes a faith in "one Lord Jesus Christ, the *Son of God*, [not God the Father, but] the only begotten of the Father, that is of the substance of the Father; God of God, light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made," &c. This article is a most fatal blow to the very foundation of the Trinity, because it represents the Son as a person and being entirely different from the Father, as much so as Isaac was from Abraham his father; it totally destroys the supposed equality of the Son with the Father, annihilates his imagined Deity and supremacy, and gives no support to any numerical unity between the three supposed equal persons in Deity. Besides, the Son is truly represented as coming down from heaven, from God the Father; as really suffering and dying for men; therefore he could not be the omnipresent, ever living God. The expressions mostly relied on to prove the Deity of the Son, if closely examined, will show directly the contrary. "Begotten of the substance of the Father," but that would not make him the Father himself, or a person of Deity, equal with the Father. Eve was made of the substance of Adam, of one of his ribs; but that did not make her *Adam* himself, the same person, or in every respect like him or equal to him. Every son of every man may be said to be begotten of the substance of his father; the father is the instrumental cause of his existence; but the son is not on that account the father, the same person or being, nor necessarily equal to,



or like him, in all respects. So the Son of God, if he were begotten or created from the substance, from an attribute, from the wisdom of God, the Father, that would not make him, personally and wholly, very God, very Father, and a self-existent being, any more than the rib of Adam made Eve *Adam* himself. The expressions, "God of God, light of light, very God of very God," though begotten of heathen philosophy, and not at all related to the Bible, yet clearly show, if they show anything, the derived existence of the Son from the Father, and of course his subordination to him. For we could not apply such expressions to the Father; we could not say, that the Father is "God of God, light of light, very God of very God," because he is *αυτοθεος* (God of himself) as Origen said; and he possesses not only light but everything underivedly in and of himself. Whereas all that the Son is, and all that he possesses, are given him by the Father, as he repeatedly said.

The expression, "begotten, not made," requires some notice. This appears to me to be the same as to say, "made, not made;" for if we examine the Bible, we shall find that begotten, or to beget, when applied to the Almighty, always signifies the same as made, to make, to create, to produce, or cause to exist. Job represents the Almighty, when recounting some of his wonderful works, as saying among other things, "Hath the rain a father? or who hath begotten the drops of the dew?" Is not the meaning here, that God causes it to rain, and that he makes, or begets the drops of the dew? Or will any one pretend, that the rain and "the drops of dew" were begotten, but not made, or caused to exist by the Almighty? A *difference* between begotten and made, I think, would never have *been begotten*, conceived, or had a being in the most prolific imagination, if it had not been absolutely necessary to support the supreme divinity of the Son of God. For those who hold to this doctrine would say to themselves, it will not do to have the supreme God, the Son, *made*; but he must be some how or other so *begotten*, as not to be made, or caused to exist. From Genesis to Revelations inclusive, no such expression can be found, as "begotten, not made."

It may be further observed, that two things more, most essential in the Trinitarian scheme, are wanting in the Nicene creed. The supposed two natures of Christ, name-

ly, very God and very man, are not to be found in this creed. And neither personality nor Deity is attributed to the Holy Ghost, the supposed third equal person of Deity.

But afterwards, in A. D. 381, the Emperor Theodosius called the first Council of Constantinople to condemn Macedonius, and to provide for the Holy Ghost, which had not before been either personified or Deified; this council made an addition to revelation, by resolving, that the Holy Spirit is the Lord and giver of life, proceeding from the Father and Son, and to be worshipped and glorified; but they did not go far enough for Trinitarian purposes; they did not declare that the Spirit was self-existent, or equal with the Father, but clearly implied the contrary; for they asserted that it proceeded from the Father, and was sent and given by the Father; therefore could not be self-existent, or independent, or equal with him. And so this codicil (as it was intended to be) to the Nicene creed, does not help to support the Trinity at all.

The famous, or rather infamous, symbol, (I feel justified in this expression, because it appears to be anti-scriptural and irrational,) known by the name of the Athanasian creed, has been considered by some as a creature of the fourth century, though the best informed say, that it was not written until several centuries after. It evidently was not a production of Athanasius, for all his writings carry a very different complexion, as we shall hereafter show. Indeed, it had no known and acknowledged father; and it was never fully adopted into the church, before the ninth or tenth century. And few, even to the present day, receive it *cordially*; and none, I believe, *understandingly*; for no one pretends to be able to understand it. It was dubbed with the name of Athanasius, to make it popular; for a doctrine, that appears to be contrary to the Bible, and to all nature and reason, must have a great name to make it current; and Athanasius was certainly a great man, in his day. It is true, and " 't is pity 't is true," that the Church of England long since (eight or nine hundred years) adopted this creed, and had it inserted in their liturgy. It may be inserted in books, but it can never, if well understood, be communicated to, and abide in the heart and understanding of a real, intelligent Christian! for I consider some parts of it abhorrent to all the doctrines of Christ. Archbishop Tillotson said he

“wished the Church of England was well rid of it.” I wish, that not only that church, but that the whole world were “well rid of it;” that it was confined in the cloyster of a monk, where it probably originated. To point out all the inconsistencies and contradictions in it, is unnecessary, it is full of them. It makes but one God, and then it makes three Gods; it makes three almighty Gods, and then declares, that there is but one almighty God; it makes the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all exactly alike and equal, and then declares, that each one is different from the other; it makes each person, by himself, almighty, and yet requires the three put together to make the one Almighty; it declares that the Son of God is the unchangeable, ever living God, and yet that he died on the cross, and descended into hell! And what is worst of all, is, the creed declares, that unless a man believe it all faithfully, all the contradictions, absurdity, and nonsense, in it, he cannot be saved. “Whosoever will be saved, before all things it is necessary that he hold the catholic faith, which faith except every one do keep whole, and undefiled, without doubt, he shall perish everlastingly.” A man may believe all that the Prophets, all that Christ and his Apostles have told and revealed; and live a holy life as they did; yet he cannot be saved unless he believes in the Athanasian creed! Highly esteemed, beloved, bishops, doctors, ministers, and all orthodox Christians, do you, can you, in the purity of your hearts, and soundness of your intellects, *seriously* and *actually* believe all this creed? I think you cannot; for if you do, it seems to me to be a renunciation of your faith in the prophets, in the apostles, and even in the Son of God himself.

It is a matter of some consolation to rational Christians, who are not tied up to human forms of creeds, but whose creed is the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, that the Episcopal Churches in America have excommunicated the Athanasian creed from their Churches in the United States. And I most ardently pray, that the Church of England, in great Britain, may soon “go and do likewise.” To me it is a matter of deep regret, of heavy grief, that a nation, so enlightened as England, so zealous in the cause of civil and religious liberty, (a nation denominated “the bulwark of our holy religion,”) so ardent to effect the emancipation of the whole world from personal.

bodily slavery, should yet suffer the immortal mind of man to remain in slavery to that monster and tyrant, the Athanasian creed !

But I will not waste time in the further consideration of this strange creed. [ See it quoted in full, page 103. ] It speaks for itself, or rather against itself. Any one, who will read the whole, must be convinced, that it affords no support to the modern doctrine of the Trinity ; indeed, nothing can be supported or proved by even a multitude of contradictions.

There were many other decrees of councils, and creeds of the fathers, in the fourth, fifth, and sixth centuries. But it is not necessary to go into a particular consideration of each one ; it is sufficient to state, that they all, if fully examined, will be found to express and fully assert the strict unity and supremacy, in every sense of the words, of God the Father. And they also acknowledge, that the Son is, at least in some respect, inferior and subordinate to the Father, and dependent on him ; that he was begotten of him, was sent by him, was obedient to him ; that he received his commission, and all his power and directions from his Father, who so loved the world, that he sent him, his only begotten Son, into it, to instruct, to teach, to make a revelation, to set a perfect example, to suffer and die, that men might be saved, and God be glorified. But it is nowhere said, that the Father is *not*, in some respect, the one, only, true God. And if the Son is, only in some respect, inferior and subordinate to the Father, he cannot be God, or equal to the Father ; for equality cannot admit of a difference, in any respect. And the supreme God cannot be partially so. And in all the creeds and decrees, where the holy spirit is noticed, it is represented as proceeding from the Father and the Son ; therefore it cannot be independent, or equal to either or both. And upon the whole I can nowhere find, in any of the ancient creeds or decrees, any clear, consistent expression of faith in three equal persons, or beings in Deity.

Leaving the first six centuries, we will not grope our way through the dark ages, searching in the cloysters of monks and friars, for unintelligible creeds, unfathomable mysteries, and the hidden knowledge of God, which are not to be found in the Bible ; but we will come directly down to a

more enlightened age, even to the time of the Reformation, so called. I will here state some of the creeds and confessions of this time and afterwards.

The Lutheran confession is as follows: "The divine essence is one, which is called, and is God, eternal, incorporeal, indivisible; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the Creator and Preserver of all things visible and invisible."

The confession of Helvetia (written A. D. 1566) alledges, that "God is one in essence or nature, subsisting by himself, invisible, without a body, infinite, eternal, the Creator of all things," &c. "We detest a multitude of Gods, because it is written, 'the Lord thy God, is one God.'"

The confession of Basil (A. D. 1532) declares, that "there is one eternal, almighty God, in essence and substance; and not three Gods (so as to take the Son and Spirit to make up that number).

The French confession (A. D. 1566) states, "We believe and acknowledge one only God, who is only one simple essence, spiritual, eternal, immutable, invisible," &c.

The confession of Belgia, in the same year, is in substance, the same.

The articles of the English Episcopal Church declare, that "there is but one living and true God, everlasting," &c.

The confession of the reformed churches in the Netherlands, revised at the Synod of Dort, (A. D. 1619) is, "We believe, that there is one only and simple Being, which we call God; and that he is eternal," &c.

The famous Westminster Confession declares, that "there is but one only living and true God, who is infinite in being and perfection, a pure Spirit invisible, without body, or passions, eternal," &c. All these confessions, and others that might be quoted, clearly declare the strict, absolute unity and supremacy of God, of God the Father; for God when used absolutely, as in the first articles of the confessions, or creeds, always means the Father; for this Bishop Pearson is a good authority; and I think it will not be denied by any one. We find no intimation, that the one only God consists of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but the contrary is necessarily implied by the expressions, "one only simple being, one only simple essence;" for if that being, or that essence, consists of three persons, three beings, or three anythings, it

cannot be a simple being, or simple essence; it must be, at best, (or at worst,) a compound being, a compound essence, a compound God, and not the one revealed Jehovah! It would seem, therefore, as if these confessions, and the ancient creeds and decrees were a complete bar, an estoppel to all arguments or pretences in favor of three persons, or three anythings, in the one, only true God. But we are willing to consider all that has been said, or can be said, contrary to this view of the subject.

I have found two confessions, the confession of the Waldenses, and the English confession of the year 1562, which differ in expression from those before quoted. The confession of the Waldenses states, that "the holy Trinity is in essence one, only true, alone eternal, almighty, and incomprehensible God, of one equally indivisible essence."

The English confession of 1562 declares, that the "Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be of one power, of one majesty, of *one* eternity, of *one* Godhead, and one substance. And although these three persons be so divided, that neither the Father is the Son, nor the Son is the Holy Ghost, nor the Father, yet nevertheless, we believe there is but one very God." These confessions, being unsupported by the multitude of modern and ancient confessions and creeds, by the Bible, reason, and the nature of things, need no comment. They themselves speak obscurity, contradiction, and opposition to the word of God. What was said by those great and learned men, Luther and Calvin, is applicable to them. "The word *trinity*," said Luther, "sounds oddly; it is a human invention; it were better to call almighty God God, than Trinity." And Calvin said "I like not this prayer, O holy and blessed Trinity; it savors of barbarity. The word *trinity* is barbarous, insipid, profane; a human invention, grounded on no testimony of God's word; the Popish God, unknown to the prophets and apostles." It is worse; it is a monster. A three-one man, or three-one any creature would be a monster. And must not a triune God be a monster deified? Let no one say, that I speak contemptuously of holy things, or of the Bible; for there is nowhere in the Holy Scriptures such an expression as *trinity*, *triunity*, or a triune God, or any expression of that signification; it is a production of human creation, unwarrantably interpolated

into the Christian creeds ; but I hope it will ere long be excommunicated.

Having considered most of the important orthodox creeds, decrees, and confessions, both ancient and modern, and having shown, as we think, that they all, or nearly all of them, not only fail to prove and support the Trinitarian doctrine, but actually disprove it, or prostrate some of its necessary and essential pillars of support, so that the whole fabrication must fall, we will now consider the arguments and reasoning of the orthodox fathers, and other great and learned men, upon the same subject.

## CHAPTER XVII.

THE ARGUMENTS AND REASONING OF THE ANCIENT FATHERS  
AND OTHER DISTINGUISHED WRITERS CONSIDERED.

WE will first quote largely from the works of the most celebrated ancient fathers and other learned and distinguished orthodox writers, that all may see for themselves, as we go along, what must be the necessary conclusion and result therefrom.

The great and learned St. Athanasius says, "Our Lord and Saviour spake in confirmation of the words of Moses; that the Lord God is one; and I thank thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth." And again; "the Son when he came into the world glorified not himself, but the Father, saying to a certain person who came to him, Why callest thou me good? There is none good but one, that is God; and to another that asked, which is the great commandment in the law; giving this answer, hear O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord; (or the Lord thy God even the Lord is one) and teaching his disciples, saying, my Father is greater than I."

The learned Bishop Bull says, "Cesaræus, (the brother of Nazianzen,) in his first dialogue, says, that Moses uses this expression, the Lord thy God is one Lord (or the Lord thy God even the Lord is one) to lead us to the knowledge of God, and that the universe is under the government of one supreme Principle, which one Principle is the Father, from whom the Son and Holy Spirit derive their original."

Again; Athanasius, in commenting on mark xii. 32, "There is one God (or God is one) and there is none other but he, says, For there is one God, and there is none other



but he. And when the Scripture saith, that the Father is the only God, and there is one God, (or God is one) and I am the first and I am the last, these things are well spoken; for he is the one God, and the only one, and the first." "The true God, who is absolutely and strictly such; I mean the *Father* of Christ. The knowledge of the one and only true God, I mean the *Father* of Christ." Again, "He whom we preach and worship is the only true God, the Lord of all creatures, and the author of all being. And who else is that but the most holy Father of Christ, even he who is far above all derivative being," &c; "who does everything by our Lord Jesus Christ."

The very learned Origen says, "He which is of himself God is that (the true) God: For which reason our Saviour says in his prayer to his Father, that they may know thee, the only true God. But whosoever God, besides the self-existent person, being so only by communication of his divinity, cannot so properly be called (*ο Θεος*) that (the true) God; but rather (*θεος*) a divine person," &c.

And Coyrian, after reciting the same verse of John, says, "Christ himself declares and testifies, that the Father who sent him must first be known, and then Christ who was sent."

Both Irenæus and Justin Martyr, two of the earliest fathers, in reference to the passage, "there is none good but one, that is God," say, "there is one that is good, even the Father who is in heaven."

Basil says, "The supreme God over all has alone that singular manner of subsistence, by which he is the Father, and subsists without deriving from any cause, and by this character he is peculiarly distinguished, [as the Son is by character of only begotten.]" "He," [the Father] says Bishop Pearson, "is the only Potentate, because he alone hath all power of himself."

Again Irenæus says, "John preached one God supreme over all, and one only begotten Son, Jesus Christ." And Justin Martyr again, "Ye have slain the just one; and ye have rejected the God over all, and Maker of all things, who sent him."

And Clemens Alexandrinus says, "Our Lord taught, that God the Father only and alone is supreme over all, whom none knoweth but the Son."

Some very ancient books represent it to be “a branch of the Gnostic heresy, to affirm Christ to be himself absolutely *τον θεον επι παντων*, the God over all.” And Origen calls it “rashness to suppose Christ to be the God over all, as being inconsistent with his own words, my Father is greater than I.” And the learned Eusebius lays it down as the constant known doctrine of the church, that “Christ himself is not (*ο επι παντων θεος*) the God over all, but that these are the peculiar titles of the Father; and he affirms that whosoever applies these titles to the Son, cannot be a pious person.”

Justin says, “Christ is Lord of host, according to the will of the Father, who gave him that power;” Clemens Alexandrius, that he is “the Lord of all ministering to the will of the supreme Father;” and Tertullian, Novatian, Hippolytus, and Epiphanius held similar views.

In commenting on Hebrews i. 8, Thy throne, O God, &c., Eusebius says, “O God, (the Son,) he that is greater and superior, even thy God hath anointed thee; so that he who anointeth is far above him that is anointed, being the God of all, and in a particular manner of him, who is (here declared to be) anointed.”

Concerning the phrase used in John i. 3, and in other places, all things were made by him, &c., Origen remarks that “the phrase, through whom, never signifies the first, but always the second cause. All things were made through the word, not by him, [as the original cause] but by one superior and greater than the word.” And Eusebius says, when the evangelist affirms that all things were made (*δια*) by (or through) him, he therein declares the ministration of the word to God, (the Father,) for he might have expressed it thus; all things were made (*υπ αυτου*) by him as the efficient cause; he does not so express it, but thus; all things were made (*δι αυτου*) by (or through) him as the ministering cause; that so he might refer us to the supreme power and efficiency of the Father, as the Maker of all things.” “The divine oracles teach us to know, that he (the Father) only is the true God, separate from all corporeal substance, and remote from all ministerial dispensation. For which reason the universe is declared to be (*εξ αυτου*) of or from him, not (*δι αυτου*) by or through him.”

Tertullian, in commenting of the passage, John x. 28-30,

remarks, "concerning his sheep our Lord says, that none can take them out of his hands. For my Father, who gave them me, is greater than all; and I and the Father are one. One thing," he says, "not one person; for one thing [*εἷς*] in the neuter gender does not express identity, but union, likeness, conjunction, the love of the Father towards the Son, and the obedience of the Son to the will of the Father. When he says, I and the Father *are* one, he shows that there are two persons, whom he so joins equally together." "And know," saith he, "that I am in the Father, and the Father in me. By the works therefore was the Father in the Son, and the Son in the Father: and *so* we understand the Father and the Son to be one by the works. Thus the whole of our Lord's discourse leads us to believe, that though they are one in power, they are nevertheless two persons, [two different beings] because otherwise there could not be believed to be a Son, if there were not believed to be two persons."

And Novatian, on the same subject, says, "If Christ had been the Father, as the heretics imagine, he would have said, I and my Father *am* one [one person]. But one in neuter gender [one thing, *εἷς*] signifies the agreement of fellowship, not unity of person. So that the Father and Son are one thing, by agreement and love. The Apostle Paul takes notice of this unity of agreement with a difference of persons. He that planteth, saith he, and he that watereth are one [one thing]. Now every body knows, that yet Apollos was one man, and Paul another, and not Paul and Apollos one and the same man."

And Origen remarks, "We serve one God, the Father. We worship the Father of the truth, and (also) the Son, who is the truth, being indeed two things in subsistence, but in agreement, and consent, and sameness of will, they are one." "When our Lord says, I and my Father are one thing, he means, (says Crysostom) one in *power*; for concerning *that* was his whole discourse." Similar remarks upon this point may be found in the writings of Basil, Alexander of Alexandria, and others or the fathers.

And concerning the Son, appearing in the name or person of the Father, [*εἷς μορφή Θεοῦ*] in the form of God, as being the image of the invisible God, whom no one hath

seen, &c., Tertullian, among other things, says, "We profess, that Christ always acted in the name of the Father; that it was he who appeared to the Patriarchs and Prophets; that the Father himself was never seen by any; that in his name, and his authority, the Son of God, which appeared, was God, [was God of God, or the Son of God]. And Irenæus, Justin Martyr, Cyprian, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Bishop Bull, and others, had similar views on the subject.

With regard to seeing the Father, Athanasius remarks, "When our Lord affirms, he that hath seen me hath seen the Father, he does not mean, that he himself was the Father; for how can that be, seeing the Father is invisible? But that he was such as the Father is. If a man, after seeing the image of a king, should desire to see the king himself, the image might say unto him, I and the king are one, and what you see in me you see in him."

Again, Origen styles the Father, "the Fountain of Divinity," and explains himself to mean thereby, "that the Son is styled God, on account of the authority and dignity derived to him from the Father; and that angels and magistrates are called gods, upon account of the authority and dignity derived to them, through the Son."

Respecting the knowledge of the Son of God, says, Irenæus, "Our Lord himself, the Son of God, acknowledges that the Father only knew the day and hour of judgment, declaring expressly, that of that day and that hour knoweth no one, neither the Son, but the Father only. The Father therefore is, by our Lord, declared to be superior, even in knowledge, that we may learn to acknowledge God only to have perfect knowledge."

Nazianzen says, "As everything else, so also the knowledge of the greatest things is to be referred up to the original cause, for the honor of the Father." "He," says Origen, "who considers these words, My Father that sent me is greater than all, will maintain, that in knowledge also the Father is greater than the Son." "Jesus who suffered for us," says Irenæus, "is that very person, which is the word of God."

And Epiphanius says, "The Father being a Spirit acts by his own authority; but the Son, who is also a spirit, acts not by his own authority as the Father does, but after a like

manner, ministerially." And Bishop Pearson held fully, that "the Son hath no power of himself, but what the Father gave him." And Tertullian says, "The Son always acted by the will and authority of the Father; for the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do."

"Our Lord," saith Irenæus, "being the only teacher of truth, we must be satisfied to be informed by him, that the Father is above all; for my Father, saith he, is greater than I." And Origen says, "Be it so, that there are some among us who *rashly* suppose that our Saviour is the supreme God over all; yet we do not think so, who believe his own words, saying, The Father which sent me is greater than I. The Son is less powerful than the Father." "But the Father," saith Marius Victorinus, "is greater, because he gave all things to the Son; and is the cause both of the Son's *being*, and of his being such as he is." The same doctrine is declared fully by Justin Martyr, Novatian, Hilary, Athanasius, Basil, Nazianzen, and Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, as their writings clearly show. It would occupy too much space to quote them all. But I will quote a little from the more modern, but not less learned Bishops Bull and Pearson; who wrote in the seventeenth century. Bishop Bull says, "What Origen affirms, viz. that the Son even as he is God, [that is God of God,] is less than the Father; this we shall show to be very catholic, and maintained, even by the fathers, after the Council of Nice, who most strongly opposed the Arian heresy."

And Bishop Pearson says, "The Father is greater [than the Son] in reference to the communication of the Godhead. I know him, saith Christ, for I am from him. And because he is from the Father, therefore he is called, by those of the Nicene Council, in their creed, God of God, &c. The Father is God, but not God of God; but Christ is God of God"; which must mean the Son of God.

Novatian says, "Christ, though he knew he was God [of God] or having God for his Father, yet he never compared himself with God the Father, remembering that he was from his Father, and that it was God the Father, who gave him to be what he was. Wherefore, both before and after his taking upon him human flesh, and after his resurrection, he always did pay all obedience to his Father. From whence it appears, that he never thought fit so to claim

to himself Divinity, as to equal himself with God the Father; nay, on the contrary, he was always obedient to his whole will and pleasure," &c.

Eusebius very forcibly inquires; "How was Christ in the form of God, if he was himself, the very supreme God? And how did he assume to be God, if he was himself the very supreme God?" And Origen says, "We may presume to affirm, that the goodness of Christ appeared greater, and more divine, and truly after the image of his Father, when he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, than if he had hastily snatched at being honored as God, and would not have become a servant for the salvation of the world." So we see that Origen implicitly declared, that the Son was a different being from the Father, having a mind and will of his own, being capable, naturally, of obeying or disobeying God; though his moral constitution was such, that it was impossible for him to disobey; for he said, "I always do those things that please the Father."

Again, Hilary says, "He (Christ) was subject to his Father, as the author of his being. Nor did he equal himself with God, in whose form he continued; but became obedient unto death."

Lactantius speaks plainly and forcibly: "Christ was faithful to God; for he taught that there is but one God, and that he only is to be worshipped. Nor did he ever call himself God; because he had not been faithful, if being sent to take away the many gods, and to declare the *One*, he had introduced any other than that one. For this would have not been preaching the one God, nor doing the work of him that sent him, but his own work. Now, because he was so faithful, and assumed nothing to himself, therefore he was invested with the dignity of an everlasting High Priest, the honor of a Supreme King, and the name [or title] of God." Because he was the true and faithful Son of God.

Concerning the passage, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of *my God*," &c. Eusebius writes, "It is not necessary that he who acknowledges the Father and Son to be two distinct subsistencies, should say, there are two Gods; for we do not look upon them as two co-ordinate persons, both of them unbegotten and underved,

but one unbegotten and underived, [and supreme] the other begotten and derived from the Father. Wherefore the Son himself also teaches us, that his Father is even *his* God also [as well as ours,] when he says, I ascend unto *my* Father and *your* Father, to *my* God and *your* God. Now, on the other side, the Son cannot be said to be the *God* of his Father, but his only begotten and beloved *Son*, and the image of the invisible God, and the brightness of his Father's glory. And he honors, and worships, and glorifies the Father, calling him even *his* God also, as well as ours.'

And again, Eusebius writes, respecting the form of baptizing "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The Father bestowing the grace, as the original author; the Son being the minister of it; and the Holy Ghost, the comforter, being the immediate distributor of it." There is nothing here appears like equality between three, or like a numerical unity.

Again Irenæus says, "Our Lord acknowledged one Father, and that he is the God over all, the one only God, the Creator, who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Bishop Pearson says, "It is most reasonable to assert, that there is but one person who is from none; and the very generation of the Son, and procession of the Holy Ghost, undeniably prove, that neither of those two can be that person. It followeth therefore, that this person is the Father. From hence he is stiled one God, the true God, the only true God, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Bishop does not say, (like modern Trinitarians,) the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are God, or the only true God; but expressly, that it is the Father alone who is such. And again, he says, "There can be but one person originally of himself subsisting; because a plurality of more *person* so subsisting, would necessarily infer a plurality of Gods.—Jesus Christ, who certainly is not the Father, cannot be a person subsisting originally of himself." Such kind of expressions abound in the Bishop's exposition on the creeds. And Bishop Bull says, "This assertion [of the Son's subordination] is particularly to be heeded, upon the account of some modern writers, who earnestly contend, that the Son may be properly stiled, God of himself; which opinion is both contrary to their own hypothesis, who maintain it, and to the catholic doctrine. He [the Father] is derived from

no original, is subject to none, and can no more be said to be sent by any, than to be begotten by any. Which things manifestly denote some superiority of the Father over the Son, even in that respect wherein he is most properly the Son of God."

The language of the learned, Dr. Payne is very clear and expressive. "The Father is the only self-existent, unoriginated Being whom the Scriptures, creeds, and Christian offices call God, absolutely, and by way of eminence and prerogative. The Son is *produced* of the Father, and so is not [*αυτοθεος*, or] God in that sense as the Father, who is from none. But God, as it signified a self-existent, unoriginated being, is predicated only of the Father."

"The Father," says Athanasius, "does *all things* by the Son and in the Holy Spirit."

And Cyril says; "when the Father willed that all things should be formed, the Son formed them, by the appointment of the Father; that so the original, absolute, supreme authority might be reserved to the Father." And Bishop Pearson says, "It appeareth clearly, that the ancients made a considerable difference between the person of the Father, *of whom* are all things, and the person of the Son by *whom* are all things." And Bishop Bull says, "It is manifest, that those words *of whom*, do denote the primary Cause; that the Father alone operates of himself, what Catholic denies? In all divine operations, the Son is the minister of the Father; forasmuch as he derived his operating power from God the Father; and the Father operates by him; and not, on the contrary, doth the Son operate by (or through) the Father."

The learned Mr. Mede says, "To us, Christians, there is but one sovereign God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we [*εις αυτον*] to him, (that is to whom as Supreme we are to direct all our services;) and one Lord Jesus Christ, *by whom* are all things, which come from the Father to us, and through whom alone we find access unto him."

Concerning prayer, Origen says; "all prayers ought to be offered to God, the Father only, and not directly to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit, but by or through them." And Archbishop Wake says, "the Lords prayer teaches us, that we should pray to God only, and to him as our Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord." And Bishop Bull says,



“what need I add, that this preeminence of the Father is acknowledged even to this day in all the liturgies of the Catholic Church. For in the doxologies we glorify God the Father in the first place, (as Justin Martyr speaks,) and almost all prayers also are put up directly to him.” And Justin Martyr says; “Next after the unbegotten ineffable God, we worship and love him who is the word of God! because for our sakes he became man, and was made partaker of our sufferings, that he might heal us.”

And Origen further says; “We ought to send up all supplications and prayer and intercessions and thanksgiving to the supreme God over all, through our high priest, who is above all angels, even him who is the living word and God [i. e. of God]. Yet we may also offer supplications and intercessions and thanksgivings and prayers to the word himself, if we can distinguish between that which is prayer strictly and directly, and that which is so figuratively and obliquely.” And the learned Bishop Bull approves of the views of Origen [see Defens. Sect. 2, Cap. 9, § 15]. And even Luther and Calvin spoke strongly against some part of the Trinitarian doctrine upon this point, as we have before noticed.

I might go on to make other similar quotations from these and other great and learned Trinitarian writers, enough to fill many hundred pages; but I trust what I have already quoted must be sufficient to convince any one, that those learned and great writers and divines considered, and fully held, that God the Father is the *one* God, the *only* true God, the supreme, self-existent God; that the *one* God always signifies the Father, and not the Son or Holy Ghost; that ο Θεος (God) used absolutely, always means the Father; that the Father *alone* is self-existent and alone supreme over all; that the Father is styled God absolutely, by way of supremacy; that the Father *only* is the object of supreme worship, honor, and praise, and that all prayers (in the highest sense of prayer) should be made directly to him, through his Son, the mediator. They have never intimated, (nor has the Bible,) that the one only true, supreme God is, or consists of, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, (as Trinitarians now *profess* to hold.) It is also evident, that the same eminent writers held, that the Son is not self-existent or independent, but that “he derived his being, and his being

what he is," and all his powers and properties from the Father; that he is, and acts in all things, subordinate to the Father; that he should be worshipped and honored not as the supreme God and Father, but only as the Son of God, or God of God, the appointed Saviour, and messenger of God the Father; that he was not the *efficient*, but only the ministerial or instrumental creator of the world; that the *Father* made and governs the world and all things, by the operations of his Son; that the Son was begotten, or caused to exist, (as well as to act,) according to the will of the Father; that he was always obedient to the commands of his Father, and in all things under his control. That the Son *sometimes* acted, or spoke, or suffered *as man*, and sometimes *as God*, is not even supposed by any of these great writers. Such an hypothesis had not then been invented.

It is further evident, that these learned divines held, that the Holy Spirit is, and acts in all things, subordinate to the Father, and the Son: proceeded from them, is sent by them, is always under their direction, and is not independent or self-existent; that the Holy Ghost is nowhere in Scripture even styled Lord or God; that neither should worship be paid, nor prayers made to the Holy Ghost as God; but that all honors and praises should redound to the glory of God the Father of all.

Now, though it is strange, yet it is (or should be) well known, that these celebrated authors, from whom I have just quoted, have been and are now considered by many, as strong supporters of the doctrine of the Trinity. But to me it appears, (and I think it must so appear to every candid, intelligent Christian,) that they have fully *disproved* the doctrine; that they have actually demolished the essential and necessary pillars of its support; that they have annihilated the supposed supreme Divinity of the Son of God, showing clearly that he is of *himself* neither omniscient nor omnipotent; that he has no power, or property whatever, but what was given him of his Father; that they have destroyed the imagined equality between the supposed three persons, making the second and third subordinate, inferior, and obedient to, and dependent upon, the first, the Father Almighty; and that they have set at nought the impossible numerical unity of three in one, or technically speaking, trinity in unity. And I cannot see, that they have left one

solid stick of timber to support the trinitarian fabrication ; that there is anything remaining, but what is *corroded* by the worms of Platonic Philosophy, or *shivered* by the blasts of monkish superstition. It is true, however, that they have sometimes apparently, *verbally* contradicted themselves. They have seemed to "darken counsel by words," by words not of the Bible, but of Plato or Philo. They have fully demonstrated that the Son is not God, (*οθεος*) and then they have said he is God, (or should be styled God,) because he is the Son of God, or is from God ; which is no more nor less than to say, he *is* God, because he is *not* God. So they speak of "eternally begotten ; not made or created, but begotten ; not begotten nor made, but proceeding from ;" and many such unintelligible expressions. But I think if we can get out of the whirlpool of their Platonic verbosity into their real meaning, we may sail along quietly upon the calm sea of anti-trinitarianism into the delightful haven of pure, scriptural doctrines. For I believe that the early fathers were sincere converts to Christianity, and that they were pious as well as learned. And I have no doubt but they thought, that they should further the cause of the Christian religion by amalgamating into it some of their philosophical principles, which had been familiar to them from their infancy. It is well known, that most of them had been early taught the philosophy of Plato or Philo ; and we all know it is a hard thing to get entirely rid of early prepossessions. "Hic labor, hoc opus est." Those parts of Scripture, upon which their philosophy could have no bearing, I think they have construed and explained quite apostolically. So here, for the present, I leave the early fathers to be admired, but to be considered with proper allowances, according to the circumstances, which surrounded them. They had been so taught before they embraced Christianity, that they were strongly inclined to blend their philosophy with religion. Mosheim says, "it is an old complaint of learned men, that the fathers or teachers of the ancient church were too much inclined to the philosophy of Plato, and rashly confounded what was taught by that philosopher with the doctrines of Christ, our Saviour ; in consequence of which, the religion of heaven was greatly corrupted, and the truth much obscured."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### ARGUMENTS AND REASONING OF LATE AND PRESENT TRINITARIANS CONSIDERED.

The object of late and present Trinitarians seems to be principally an attempt to show, that the Son of God is "very God," the only true God, the supreme, self-existent, almighty God. And for this purpose, as they do not pretend, that there is in the Bible any express evidence of the fact, they endeavor to make it out by inference and implication, though it is not directly and clearly proved. They say that the Son possesses ubiquity or omnipresence; that he is omniscient, — that he is almighty, or exercises almighty power, — that he is eternal, — that he is to be the final judge of all, — that he received worship, such as is due to none but the supreme God, — that he associated his name with the Father, in the rite of baptism; and that he is in Scripture called and styled God. Therefore they infer, that he is God, the supreme God. Each of these points I will briefly consider.

The ubiquity or omnipresence of Christ, I presume, is supposed to extend only to heaven, and earth, and all the beings and things thereof, and not to Venus, Saturn, Herschel, and all the other planets that have been discovered, or that there may be, which have not yet been discovered, with all their inhabitants, and appurtenances. There is certainly no color of evidence to extend it any further than this supposition. Now, suppose it were proved, that the Son was, and is, everywhere, and at all times present in heaven and earth, would that show, that he possesses *of himself* ubiquity

and omnipresence in the strict, literal, and most extensive sense; that, like the Father of the universe, he is at all times everywhere abiding, throughout infinite space; that "he holdeth the stars in his right hand; that he maketh Arcturus, Orion, Pleiades, and the chambers of the South; that he walketh upon the wings of the wind; that he taketh up the ocean in the hollow of his hand?" No such language is applied to the Son in the Bible, either in a strict or figurative sense. But if he did possess all this great and wonderful power, capacity and omnipresence, might not all be bestowed upon him by his almighty Father? He repeatedly said *all* power in heaven and earth was given him of his Father. Therefore he could not be the original possessor; he could not be the independent God.

To be present, is to be enabled to see, or hear, or know, all that is done or exists, in a certain place and time. A person in a large hall, where ten thousand people are assembled, may be said to be present in every part of the hall, and with every person there; because he can see, or hear, or know, all that is, or is done there; and (*quoad hoc*) as to that hall and the people there, he may be said to be omnipresent. We know that such terms as *all*, *every*, and *everywhere*, are often used in a restricted sense, according to the connexion in which they are used. Let us suppose, that, instead of our present limited powers, the Almighty should enlarge the boundaries thereof, (as he certainly could, if he saw fit to change our natures and enlarge our capacities,) and should give us capacity to see, and hear, and know all that is, and is done in the whole world; nay more, to behold the glories of heaven, and hear the high praises, and enchanting anthems, and hallelujahs, constantly ascending to Him, who sitteth on the throne! Would this prove that we are God, or persons of Deity? No. It would only show that our heavenly Father had been most abundantly and unspeakably gracious and beneficent to us; and that we should be (if possible) under greater obligations to love, praise, and glorify our supreme Benefactor. Now, if the Son was endowed by the Father with the capacity and power of omnipresence, in the highest sense, could it prove him to be that God, who gave him that power? Or would it only show that he was the highly favored, glorious messenger and agent of the Father; that he was, indeed, his dearly

beloved Son? But perhaps it will be said, this is speculating. Well, then, we will come to facts, to the evidence of the Bible, and show that there is not proof of the personal omnipresence of the Son, even so far as to heaven and earth; that the passages, considered the strongest proof texts, not only fail to prove, but actually disprove the allegation. One of the texts thought most favorable to this doctrine is John iii. 13. — “No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man, who is [was] in heaven.” Now if the Son came down from heaven to earth, as we are told, and believe, he could not have been here before he came down, and he could not have come down, if he was here before, nor could he, at any time, ascend into heaven, if he was, and is, and always will be, there, and everywhere. Indeed, the whole language of the Bible about Christ’s coming and going, descending and ascending, being sent from heaven by the Father, and going and ascending to *his* Father and our Father, to his God, and *our* God, must be a mere tale of nonsense and falsehood, if Christ is strictly and personally omnipresent. But if the Bible gives a true relation of facts, the Son of God cannot be, strictly and personally, an omnipresent being; though in a figurative sense he may be considered as present upon earth, and still be in heaven; as Moses and the Prophets, a thousand years after their deaths, were said to be with the rich man’s brethren on earth; “they have Moses and the Prophets,” that is, they had their writings and prophecies, and so figuratively speaking had them. After this manner should Christians always consider Christ as present; as present by his gospel, by the remembrance of his holy life, his miracles, his sufferings, death, resurrection, and triumphant ascension! But while they remember these things, they cannot believe, that he is, or was the supreme God; or that he is, or will be with them, (as the days of miracles are gone by,) except in a figurative sense, until he shall come again, at the last day.

The last part of this verse *ο υν εν τω ουρανω* (who *is* in heaven,) may be rendered who *was* in heaven; the participle *ων* being often used for the past, (there being no past participle to the verb *ειμι*,) and sometimes for the future. And John and the other Apostles often used the present tense for the past; as John ix. 2 and 38, — “His disciples

say unto him," for said unto him. "Jesus therefore again groaning in himself *cometh* to the grave," i. e. came to the grave. And the present is used for the future in Matthew xxvi. 5. — "Ye know that after two days *is* the feast of the passover," i. e. *will* be the feast; "the Son of man *is* (i. e. will be) betrayed." The same participle, *ων*, has a past tense meaning in John ix. 25, *ου τυφλος ων, αρτι βλεπω*, (though I was blind, I now see,) and also John i. 49, *ουτα ειδον σε* (I saw thee when (*ουτα* being) thou wast under the fig-tree. Now if this participle were translated here, as it is in the verse we have been considering, it would read thus, — whereas (or though) I *am* blind I now see, — and I saw thee, when thou art under the fig-tree. This shows that the translation in our text is wrong — that it should be, who *was* in heaven. Besides, in a great many other instances the present Greek participle is used for the past tense. So we see that nothing can be proved to the point by this wrong translation. Other texts of this kind have been cited; — "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them;" "Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world." Such expressions must evidently be understood in the figurative sense before stated.

Again; it is argued, that the Son must be the supreme God, because he is omniscient and omnipotent. I consider these two terms together, the same kind of argument and evidence being applicable to each. Now it is well known, that omniscience, or the knowing of all things, and omnipotence, the power of doing all things, are often used in a limited sense; as Paul said, "we (the Apostles) know *all* things" — "can do all things;" that is, all things that have been revealed to us, or all things that we are enabled to do by divine power, or all things relative to our ministry. But granting, that Christ did and does know all things in the universe, and was able to do all things, could not this knowledge, or power of knowing and doing, be communicated to him by the Almighty Father? And would it not be included in the "all power in heaven and earth," which he expressly said was given him of the Father? If so, then he would not be omniscient or omnipotent of himself, like the Almighty, whose omniscience and omnipotence were never given or communicated to him.

I am sensible, that it has been argued, that omniscience and omnipotence cannot be communicated; that the *Almighty* cannot impart them even to his beloved Son. The learned, and sometimes very candid and impartial Professor Stuart implicitly, by interrogatory, declares himself of this opinion. "And can omniscience," says he, "be imparted? We may as well say omnipotence, or self-existence can be imparted, as omniscience."\* True, *omnipotence* may as well be imparted, as omniscience; but self-existence is something very different, which I will notice by itself. Let me ask, what is the meaning of the words omniscience, and omnipotence? If we go to the derivation of them, from *omnis scientia* and *omnis potentia*, we must say they mean *all* knowledge and *all* power. Now, if the Almighty cannot communicate *all* knowledge and *all* power, I wish the professor would tell us how much of it, what part of it, he can communicate. It will not be denied but some, that much may be, and has been communicated. We feel and know it. I am inclined to think, that a little has been granted to me, for which I feel thankful. And I know, that great knowledge has been imparted to the Professor, (for which, no doubt, he is very thankful,) that there are given him strong powers of reasoning, and of understanding almost all languages and sciences; but I know, that he is not so vain as to suppose, that here was the greatest exercise of power, that the Almighty could display in the bestowment of gifts. I believe he is such a humble Christian, that he is willing to consider others better than himself, and to believe, that greater knowledge and powers may be imparted to others than to himself. I would therefore inquire of the Professor, whereabouts he supposes this almighty power of God stops; for it must stop somewhere, if it does not go for the whole power; and I would further inquire, if there is, or can be, any being in the universe, who can authoritatively say to the Almighty, in regard to his communications, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther;" and here shall thy almighty power be staid! I cannot believe, that *that* Being, whom the universe proclaims, and who has proclaimed himself, *The*

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\* Professor Stuart's Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 100.



*Almighty*, can be a limited Almighty; — that he can be impeded in the exercise of his almighty powers.

The learned Professor, I think, has been very uncandid in classing the self-existence of God among his communicable powers of omniscience and omnipotence. He certainly must acknowledge, that self-existence is not in any degree, or part, a communicable or transferable power or attribute of God; but it is rather the cause or producer of all powers and attributes, and cannot be transferred or granted to another, without the annihilation of the self-existent Being himself. To illustrate this, let us come down to terrestrial affairs. I will suppose, that the Professor could communicate or impart to me all his great knowledge, and his vast powers of reasoning, &c., *if* I had capacity enough to receive and retain them, (which I have not the vanity to think I possess,) yet he cannot impart to me his unalienable existence, or the mode of it; he cannot transfer to me what is peculiar and necessary to his very existence, such as his breath, the circulation of the blood, the pulsations of his heart, or his brains, the source of his intelligent being; if he could, and did, he must cease to exist himself. So the light and heat of the sun are communicated to our world, but the sun itself cannot be communicated or transferred to the earth, without destruction to the whole solar system, — the centre, attractor, and controller of which being removed from its place, chaos would come again.

I therefore agree with the learned Professor, that the self-existence of the Almighty cannot be imparted to any being, not even the Son. And I will here whisper in the Professor's ear, that I think he must agree, in the necessary inference, that the Son cannot be very God, because the necessary property of self-existence could not be imparted to him; without which he could not be the supreme, self-existent Deity. But I am persuaded, that the Almighty can impart *all* knowledge, *all* power, *and everything* that is communicable, as well as any part thereof, to any being whom he has made capable of receiving and exercising it. And I have, in every point of view, such an exalted opinion of the Son, that I am persuaded he is made fully capable of receiving and exercising all power, and everything that the Father in his good pleasure and abundant love,

pleases to communicate or impart to him. Christ expressly declared, "all power in heaven and earth is given me of my Father." And can any one suppose, that a God of infinite wisdom and knowledge, as well as power, would give to his Son all power, when he knew that he had not capacity to receive and use it? Would not his infinite wisdom and power qualify to receive, before his infinite power should give? To give or grant anything to a person, known to be incapable of receiving and using it, would be worse than folly; it would be mockery and insult. I cannot therefore doubt the capacity of the beloved Son of God to receive and use whatever the Father might be pleased to impart to him; and who will presume to limit or control the *power* of the bountiful, unbounded Giver? But although the power of the Father, and capacity of the Son, are thus ample, yet it is evident, from the Bible, that the Father (for wise reasons most surely) has not, or had not, at a certain time, given the Son, strictly, *all* knowledge, and *all* power. And if this is made to appear, the supposed inference, that the Son is the supreme God, will be without foundation. Let us look to the evidence.

Without commenting upon those texts usually cited upon this point, (some of which we have already considered, and all of which must be controlled by positive testimony,) as in some way, implying the full omniscience and omnipotence of the Son of God, we surely may be satisfied with the express, clear declaration of Christ himself. Hear his testimony; and doubt, or deny it, if you can. In Mark xiii. 32, Christ says, (referring to the day of Judgment, or perhaps the destruction of Jerusalem,) "But of that day, and that hour knoweth no *man*, (no one, *οδεις*) no not the angels in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." And in Mat. xxiv. 36, the same is declared, in words a little different, but fully as strong; "But of that day and that hour knoweth no (one); no, not the angels in heaven, but the Father *only*." Here *the Son* is omitted, but *only* is added to the Father, which excludes from the knowledge, the Son as well as every other being or person, but the Father. And relative to power, Christ said, when a request was made for two of his disciples to be permitted to sit, the one on his right hand and the other on his left, &c.; "but but to sit on my right hand and on my left, is not *mine* to

give." Is there need of further testimony? Or can this be set aside, by human invention? Can creeds, confessions, catechisms, or ecclesiastical decrees, invalidate the testimony of the Son of God? It must be acknowledged, that if the Son is not possessed of all knowledge, and all power, concerning everything in the universe, if he fails of it in a single point, he cannot be the supreme all-comprehending God; for the Almighty is not a Being of *infinite* knowledge and power, with a *limitation*.

Again; it is argued and inferred, that the Son must be the supreme God, because he is eternal, uncreated, having existed from all eternity. If this were a fact, if the Bible proved it so, the inference would be necessary and undeniable. But it is not pretended, that there is any express evidence of the eternal existence of the Son, in a retrospective view, in the Bible. It should be well observed, that in the Scriptures the terms, *eternal* and *everlasting*, are generally used prospectively, and not retrospectively, except when applied to God the Father, as "life eternal, everlasting punishment," &c., meaning a never ending life, but not a life without beginning; and a punishment that shall never end, but not one that never began, or was from all eternity. And these terms are also used often in a restricted sense, to express a very great length of time, as "the everlasting hills, for an everlasting possession," which cannot mean without beginning, nor without end. It would seem as if the terms alone, "the only begotten Son of God," carried self-evident proof, enough to satisfy any one, that the Son cannot be eternal, or have an existence from eternity; for if he is "the begotten Son," there must have been a time when he was begotten, and he could not have existed before he was begotten, or before his existence was caused. I know it has been said, that he is "the eternally begotten Son." But I fully agree with Professor Stuart, who says, "I am unable to conceive of a definite meaning in the terms, *eternal generation*; and I cannot regard them in any other light than as a solecism, a palpable contradiction of language."\* Again he acknowledges, † "that those passa-

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\* Professor Stuart's Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 31.

† Ibid. p. 103.

ges of Scripture, which speak of Christ's existence before the creation of the world, do not explicitly assert his eternity." And then he adds very inconsistently, I think; "But then it is difficult to *conceive* that they do not *imply* eternity." And he adopts, or quotes, a sentence from Doederlein; "For to exist before the beginning of the world, what can it mean, but to exist from eternity?" Let us see to what absurdities, and acknowledged falsehoods this kind of reasoning will lead. The angels, no doubt, were created, or existed, before the beginning of the world. Did they exist from eternity? Had Adam been created ten days sooner than he was, that is four days before the beginning of the world, would he have existed from eternity?

Of those passages, which Professor Stuart says, "it is difficult to conceive that they do not *imply* eternity," are the following, "In the beginning was the word," &c. "For the life was manifested, and we have seen *it* and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us." "And now, O Father, glorify thou me, with thine own self, with the glory I had with thee, before the world was." And, "Father I will," &c. (John xvii. 24.) "for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world," &c. The Professor has wisely made no comments on these passages; for I think, that even his great intellectual powers could raise no argument therefrom, favorable to his *implication*. It is not only difficult, but impossible for me to conceive, that these passages *do*, in any respect "*imply* eternity." For it is an acknowledged rule and principle, that nothing can be *implied* or *inferred*, which is contrary to *clear* and *positive* proof; and I conceive, that the eternal existence of the Son is not only not proved, but clearly disproved by the word of God. And it is not allowable to imply or infer anything that is impossible; we are not to infer, that the invisible God is a material being, like man, from what we read of his eyes, his hands, his arms, his ears, his mouth, &c.; because it is impossible that a purely spiritual Being (as he is proved and acknowledged to be) can be material. So, I conceive, it is not *implied*, from a mere shadow of evidence, (or none at all,) that the Son existed as God from eternity; because that would make two eternal, supreme Beings, (the Father almighty being allowed to be so,)

which would be impossible according to the Bible as well as nature and reason,

Again, the same Professor says, "But most specially do I feel, that Rev. xxii. 13, is decisive on this subject.\* *Εγω το Α και το Ω, ο πρωτος και ο εσχατος, η αρχη και το τελος* "I am alpha and omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end." I think that this passage, with the context, especially the ninth and fourteenth verses, is decisive on the subject; but the decision must be directly contrary to the views of the Professor. I agree that the speaker, in the 13th verse, is Christ; and I hope he will be so candid as to acknowledge, that Christ is the speaker in the ninth verse also; if he does not, we will prove it by his own arguments. His clear reasons, for concluding that Christ is the speaker in the 13th verse, are because, "1st. In the preceding verse he says, Behold I come quickly. 2d. In the sixteenth verse, the same person says, I Jesus have sent," &c. There are exactly the same reasons to show that Christ is the speaker, in the 9th verse. In the preceding, the 7th verse, he says, Behold I come quickly; and repeats the same afterwards, in the 12th verse; and adds I Jesus, in the 16th. Therefore, according to Professor Stuart, and in consistency with the language of the whole chapter, Christ must be the person who speaks in the 9th verse. And what does he say? "Then saith he unto me," after John had fallen down to worship him, "see thou do it not; I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, the Prophets; worship God." Do not worship me, as God, who am only his servant as you are, (though a highly exalted one,) his messenger, his only Son. And is it possible, if Christ had been the eternal God, that he could have told John, that he was his fellow servant, and that he would have forbidden his worshipping him, if he was that Being, to whom alone supreme worship should be paid? And could he have *directed* John to worship God, by prohibiting his doing it, as he did, if he was God himself? Again, if Christ had intended to reveal to John, that he was the eternal God, would he not have said so, plainly, by the use of only three Greek words, *Εγω ο Θεος*, I am

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\* Professor Stuart's Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 104.

the eternal God? Would he, instead thereof, have used sixteen words of uncertain meaning? the probable meaning of which I conceive to be no more than this; Christ had been discoursing about the Church, the saints, the redeemed, &c., and I believe he spoke these words, in reference to them; to them he was, and is, indeed, "alpha and omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end," their Redeemer and Saviour, their Advocate, their Lord and Master, their mainstay, their *all!* There is nothing contained in this passage like a declaration of the eternal existence of the Son of God. But that the speaker, in this passage, is not the supreme God, is certain, from the next following verse, where he says; "Blessed are they that do *his* [God's] commandments, that they may have a right to the tree of life," &c.; whereas if he had been God, he must have said, blessed are they that do *my* commandments, &c. Besides the expression, "behold I come quickly," which is often repeated by Christ, shows clearly, that he is not that glorious Being, who never comes nor goes; because he is omnipresent, and at all times fills immensity!

It does therefore appear to me, that this passage, which the learned Professor did "most specially feel" would be "decisive on the subject," turns out to be, like the straw which the drowning man seized, of no avail. I agree that the Book of Revelation is a holy book; but it seems to be a book not of doctrines, but rather of rhapsodies. And it must be considered as highly figurative and allegorical, if not bombastic. If fully and critically examined, its effusions will not be found to be productive of Trinitarianism. It makes as much difference and distinction between God the Father, and his Son and Messenger, as we do between a king and his minister and ambassador, whom no one considers as one and the same person; or as each of them possessing equal and underived powers. And in the whole Book of Revelation, the Holy Spirit is not once spoken of as God, or a person of Deity equal with the Father, or a being to be worshipped as God. Nor is there one expression that can *possibly* mean trinity.

Again, it is argued, that Christ must be the Supreme God, because he is, or is to be, the Judge of the whole world, of all intelligent beings. The reasoning of Trinitarians, upon this point, appears to me to be contradictory.

They argue that he is God, because he is judge of all; and then they say, he is not God as judge, he is not appointed judge as *God*, but as mediator, in his mediatorial capacity only, in which he could not be God. The argument, then, amounts to this; Christ is the supreme God, because he is judge, and he cannot be God because he *is* judge. If this is not contradiction, what can be? Professor Stuart says, "He [Christ] does indeed act as judge, by delegated authority; because it is in his mediatorial capacity that he acts as judge; but to act as judge is one thing, to be qualified for such an office is another. Exaltation as mediator constitutes him judge, in that capacity; omniscience, and omniscience only can qualify him for the duties of that station."\* And then, by way of interrogatory, he declares that omniscience cannot be imparted; therefore it cannot be imparted to this mediatorial judge; and so he must be an appointed judge without qualification or capacity for the duties of the appointment. The whole reasoning, then, of the Professor amounts to this, that the all-wise, omniscient God has appointed a person to be the judge of all, who *is* not and cannot be made capable of fulfilling the duties of the office. If this is not inconsistency, I know not what inconsistency can mean. Nay; it must be something more; It must be accusing God of folly! Should any governor, or chief magistrate on earth *thus* appoint a judge, he would be called a fool. But it is not necessary to waste time in further discussing this point. This perfect, supreme judiciary system is easily understood, if we will go by the Bible-constitution. It is evident from the Bible, that God will judge the world, all intelligent beings, by his Son, whom he hath appointed, and by his gospel, commandments, and laws, which he promulgated while on earth.

Again, it is argued, that Christ is God, because prayers and supplications were made to him; and that he received worship and honor, such as are due to the supreme God; and that the angels were commanded to worship him: There can be no difficulty upon this point, if we rightly understand, as Origen says, what prayer is, and what is meant by worship and honor. Prayer is the offering of

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\* Professor Stuart's Letters to Dr. Channing, p, 100.

our desires, requests, or supplications for things we need, to a being capable of granting what we request. Prayers or requests, in an inferior sense, may be offered to any created being or person, who has the power of granting us any good, or saving us from any evil, though he receives his power of aiding us, from the Almighty, to whom in the highest sense our prayers should ascend. In an inferior sense I may supplicate a house-wright to build me a comfortable house, because from the talent God has given him, he is capable of doing it; while in the highest sense I should pray to the supreme Architect of the universe to prosper and direct him in the undertaking; but I could not reasonably request him to make the house in such a manner, that I might be sure to live in it a hundred years; because that would be beyond his power. To all the agents and ministers of God for good to us, we make requests and supplications, that they would grant us all the favors, that God has empowered them to do for us. And sometimes it may be justifiable to make petitions and requests to evil ministers, to those who are plotting mischief against us, because they have the physical power (God has permitted them) to injure us, if they are so disposed. I believe the most pious orthodox Christian would not hesitate, in a certain event, to pray and make ardent supplication to a most atrocious highwayman. If the robber, armed with deadly weapons, should attack him alone and unarmed, and, after having robbed him of his money, should be about to take his life, he would fall down on his knees, and beg for mercy, that he would spare his life; he would endeavor to move him to compassion by all the arguments he could use. And in so doing, he would not be guilty of idolatry, nor would he acknowledge the robber to be God, because he (in a certain sense) prayed to him; but he would be justifiable, if at the same time his secret, highest prayer to God was, that he who is in a supreme sense, the preserver of all our lives, would arrest the arm of the assassin, and turn his heart from his evil design. Prayer should always be made according to the circumstances of the case, according to the natural fitness of things, and in consistency with the character of the being to whom it is addressed. We may (and I think we should) pray to Christ as the Ambassador of God, as our constituted Mediator, Advocate, and Saviour, to grant



us all that the Father almighty had empowered him to do for us; we may pray to him to grant us salvation, because God has given him power to grant it, upon condition that we repent, &c.; but we cannot reasonably pray to him give us salvation without repentance, or without love to God, and faith in him as our Saviour; because he is not empowered thus to do, and because it would be inconsistent with the plan of the Almighty. No doubt, prayer of some kind may be offered to an agent or minister, as well as to the principal. But prayer, in its highest sense, that is, a petition to the supreme Being, who alone has of himself underived power to grant the prayers of all petitioners, was never offered to Christ while on earth. And he himself expressly taught, that it never should be, but that it should be made to the Father only; and he practised what he taught. He taught his disciples, "when ye pray, say, our Father, who art in heaven," &c. And he himself always prayed to the Father: he never prayed to "God the Son," nor to "God the Holy Ghost," nor to the "holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity." And can there be any professed Christian, who will *directly*, or *indirectly*, pronounce the doctrines which Christ taught *erroneous*, or the examples he set, unworthy of imitation? No; it cannot be.

Somewhat similar remarks may be made respecting worship and honor. They are often used as synonymous, generally so in the Bible. There are different degrees in worship or honor; as worship or honor <sup>to the supreme</sup> God is the highest, that to his Son is the next, and from thence we come down to kings, governors, judges, parents, &c., to all whom honors should be paid according as they are due to each. We read in the same sentence of worship paid to God and the king; not the same worship in degree, but that worship to God, which is his due, and that to the king, which is his; and so the king is worshipped or honored as God is, according to what is due and right. And according to this principle is to be understood that passage in John, "that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father." All men do, or should worship or honor the Father as the Creator, Governor, and Director of all things, for such honor is his due; so all men should honor the Son, as the Son of God, as their Saviour, for that is the honor due to him. And no higher honor or worship was

ever paid to him on earth, or directed to be ever paid to him. When the wise men from the east worshipped him in his infancy, they worshipped him as their expected Messiah, as their king, their temporal deliverer, as their conduct shows. Can any one suppose, that Herod, when he pretended, that he also was desirous to go and worship him, thought of worshipping him as the supreme God? No; all the worship he intended was to kill him, because he feared he was to be the king of the Jews, and would deprive him of his office. Wicked as he was, it is not to be presumed, that he thought of taking the life of the ever-living God, by slaying the children from two years old and under. The disciples of Christ never honored or worshipped him, as the supreme God, but always as his Son, their Lord and Master, and their Saviour; though all must redound to the glory of God the Father. And thus did all, that ever worshipped him on earth. And the same kind of worship were the angels directed to pay him. "When he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the Angels of God [not the angels of the Son] worship him." Worship whom? The unbegotten, self-existent God? No; but the only begotten Son of God, But, to consider an honor, which is infinitely above every other honor, how did the almighty Father himself honor Christ? Did he honor him by proclaiming him to be the supreme God? By no means. But honored and glorified him, by <sup>proclaiming him from heaven.</sup> "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." To render to Christ greater honor and praise than are due to him, as the Son or Messenger of God, would be as unjustifiable as to render him less than his due. To bestow on the Son such honors and worship, in the highest sense, as are due only to the Father of the universe, would be supererogation towards the Son, and gross injustice towards the Father. It would be wrongfully giving to the Son what belongs of right only to the Father. It would not be according to the doctrine of Christ, rendering to Cæsar what belongs to Cæsar, and to God what belongs to God. The true principle for preferring honor is, that it should always be according to the character, worth, merits, and exaltation of the person or being to whom it is offered. We should honor our father and mother, as the instrumental parents of our being; we should

honor Christ as our Mediator and Saviour, as the Son and Messenger of God; and in the highest degree we should honor God the Father, as the almighty Parent of the universe. From a full view of this subject, therefore, the fair and necessary inference is *not*, that Christ is the supreme God, but that he is his Son; that he was his Son, not only before the world was, when he was in the bosom of his Father, and up to the time of his incarnation, but after his birth on earth, when he dwelt in "a body prepared for him." God was as much the Father (and miraculously more so) of his body, as of his spirit. He had no Father, in any respect, but God. Where he is styled in the Scriptures "the Son of Man," I consider the expression has a figurative meaning, that he appeared as a man, which was necessary for fulfilling the plan of infinite love and wisdom; that he had something of human nature, which was imparted to him by the Father, in a miraculous manner, and not by ordinary generation; so that, strictly speaking, he was not the Son of any man, but truly, in every respect, the Son of God, and not that supreme God, who begot him, or caused his existence.

Again; it has been argued, that the Son must be God, because he has associated his name with the Father in the rite of baptism. I think enough has already been said on this point in pages 119, 125.

It is also strongly urged, that the Son is God, because in Scripture he is styled and called God and Lord. I need not add much to what has before been offered on this point. It is evident, that this argument, if it should prove anything, would prove too much. It would equally prove that Moses, the prophets, kings, governors, bishops, and others are Gods; that the gods many and lords many, whereof we read, are supreme Gods or Lords, which no one will admit; therefore the argument must be of no account.

A part of Professor Stuart's creed and argument is, that "the Son possesses not simply a similar or equal essence and perfections, but *numerically the same* as the Father, without division or multiplication." And then in the next sentence he adds, "The Son (and so the Holy Spirit) does, in some respect, truly and really, not merely nominally and logically, differ from the Father."\* Did I not know that

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\* Professor Stuart's Letters to Dr. Channing, p. 19.

it was the learned and profound Professor Stuart, who *thus* wrote, I should be led to think, that the writer was, really, what Festus said of Paul; for I cannot conceive, that the Son can be numerically and exactly the same as the Father, and yet that he does truly and really differ from him, in some respect. Sameness will admit of no difference at all. Difference is as opposite to sameness, as multiplicity is to unity. What can the Professor mean, by a real difference, in this sameness, in some respect? In what respect does he mean it? Is it the minimum respect, or a great respect, or the maximum respect? Be it either; it alters not the principle. If there is a difference at all, there cannot be a sameness.

Professor Stuart and other modern Trinitarians seem inclined to exchange the three persons in Deity for three distinctions in the Godhead; as they are not able to get along with the three persons, without making three Gods; for no man, of common sense or of Scripture knowledge, will believe but that a person is an intelligent being; and as Trinitarians say, that each of the three persons (beings) is God, is Almighty, they must have three almighty Gods, or else sacrifice the persons, verbally, at least. Many therefore now say, that there is a threefold distinction in the Godhead, or that there are three differences or distinctions in Deity. To avoid Scylla, they plunge into Charybdis. For it seems to me, that by this change they entirely destroy all personality in Deity, not only that of the Spirit and Son, but also of the Father; for was it ever thought or imagined, that a distinction is a person, an intelligent being or agent? According to this view, how would the Bible read? *Thus*; The first distinction in the Godhead so loved the world, that he sent the second distinction into the world, to teach, instruct, and save sinners, to work miracles, to suffer and die, to rise again, and to reascend to the first distinction, and to be seated at his right hand. And after that, the first and second distinctions send the third distinction to perform the works of sanctification and consolation. Such kind of distinction I cannot distinguish from nonsense, excepting that it is worse. I regret, I grieve, that such strange, inconsistent notions should enter into the imaginations of good and great men.

From our examination thus far, I think it clearly appears,

that the doctrine of the Trinity is not supported by the Bible, by nature or reason, by ancient or modern creeds, or the decrees of councils, nor by the arguments and reasoning of its own advocates, ancient or modern; but these all either disprove it in toto, or prostrate some of the most essential and necessary pillars of its support. I have but one more point to consider, and that, may be easily explained.

It has been strongly urged, that the Trinitarian doctrine has been so long generally held and believed in the Christian world, by the most pious, able, and learned men, that "it is now too late to dispute about it; that it is too late to make a question about it," after it has stood the shock of time, for fifteen hundred years, or more. But can it ever be too late for the display of truth? Can any length of time make an erroneous doctrine true? Can any number of centuries cause the immutable God to become man? Can thousands of years make the son of God his own Creator or Father; or make an impossibility a thing credible? While the world remains, can it be unnecessary or improper to rely upon the evidence of the Bible, above all other proof, respecting God, his Son, and Spirit? Can time, or eternity, ever make the truth of God a lie? But if we come to things more familiar, and better known and understood, we may see, that this argument is fallacious, and not to be considered conclusive. For nearly six thousand years, and until the sixteenth century, it was believed by the whole world, both the learned and the unlearned, that the sun moved round the earth every twenty-four hours, and that the earth was stationary, and did not revolve on its own axis diurnally.

In the sixteenth century, Copernicus, of immortal memory, introduced a (then) new, now universally acknowledged, true planetary system, showing that the sun is stationary, in the centre of the system, and that all the planets move regularly around the sun; and that the earth revolves on its own axis daily. But this new, though true system, was at first violently opposed by the mathematicians, astronomers, and monks of that age, as dangerous to the honor of the Bible. And Copernicus, after all his meritorious labor and researches, was excommunicated by the Papal government, and his system was condemned as heresy. And this sentence of condemnation was not annulled by the Vatican

government, till A. D. 1820. And in the first part of the seventeenth century, the great Galileo, for nobly advocating the true Copernican system, was persecuted, brought before the inquisition, imprisoned, and cruelly treated; and he died a martyr in the cause of truth. I do not find, that those astronomers and monks, who opposed the true planetary system, argued as the Trinitarians, who oppose the true, plain system of the Gospel now do; that the old planetary system had been held to, and believed so long, nearly six thousand years, (four times as long as the existence of Trinitarianism,) that it was then *too late* to dispute it, to make a question about it, or to attempt to set up or establish any new or different system; but I would ask all Trinitarians, if such arguments had been used, would they now consider them as good and sufficient arguments so support the old system, in opposition to the Copernican, the present acknowledged true system? I presume they will all answer in the negative. They will acknowledge, that the old system was erroneous, that no length of time could establish it against the true one. And can candid Trinitarians believe or argue, that fifteen or sixteen hundred years of credulity will establish their more absurd doctrine, so that to doubt it is a damnable heresy; and so that all, who do "not believe it faithfully, must undoubtedly perish everlastingly," according to the Orthodox creeds? This is a matter, that demands serious consideration. I agree that the circumstance, that the Trinitarian doctrine has been generally held and believed by great, pious, and learned men, for fourteen or sixteen centuries, would be *prima facie* evidence of its truth, if it had been silently acquiesced in; if as great and eminent men had not constantly written and remonstrated against it. I will mention some, against whom the tongue of slander dare not hiss a word;—Newton, Locke, Milton! and further, if its origin, progress, and continuance could not be accounted for in any way, but from the necessity of its truth. But I think it can be otherwise easily accounted for, which I shall attempt to show in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE ORIGIN AND PROGRESS OF THE TRINITARIAN DOCTRINE AND THE CAUSES OF ITS CONTINUANCE.

IF we place any dependence upon ecclesiastical history, from the time of the Apostles for two or three centuries, (and it should be remembered, that all the ancient ecclesiastical historians were considered orthodox,) we must say, with the learned Professor Norton, "we can trace the history of this doctrine, and discover its source, not in the Christian revelation, but in the Platonic philosophy; which was the prevailing philosophy during the first ages after the introduction of Christianity, and of which all the more eminent Christian writers, the fathers, as they are called, were in a greater or less degree disciples. They, as others have often done, blended their philosophy and their religion into one complex, heterogeneous system; and taught the doctrines of the former, as those of the latter. In this manner they introduced errors into the popular faith." "It is an old complaint of learned men," says Mosheim, "that the fathers or teachers of the ancient Church were too much inclined to the Philosophy of Plato, and rashly confounded what was taught by that philosopher, with the doctrines of Christ our Saviour; in consequence of which, the religion of heaven was greatly corrupted, and the truth much obscured." "Few of the learned are so unacquainted with ecclesiastical history as to be ignorant what a great number of errors and most preposterous opinions flowed in from this impure [unscriptural] source." And, no doubt, one of the most erroneous and preposterous of these opinions was the strange doctrine of the Trinity. Plato was the authori-

ty relied on by some of the earliest Trinitarian fathers. Clement of Alexandria, one of the early Platonizing fathers, endeavors to show, that the doctrine was taught by that philosopher. He observes, that, in one of the epistles attributed to Plato, mention is made of a second and third principle, besides "the King of all; by which he can understand nothing to he meant, but the sacred Trinity; the third principle being the Holy Spirit, and the second principle being the Son, by whom all things were created, according to the will of the Father." Eusebius states, that Constantine, in an oration to the assembly of saints, "eulogized Plato as teaching conformably to the truth; that there is a first God, the Father, and a second God, the Logos, or Son." And Augustine, in his Confessions, states, that he found the doctrine concerning the Logos in a Latin translation of some Platonic writings. Basnage says, "Christianity in its triumph, has often reflected honor on the Platonists; and as the Christians took some pride in finding the Trinity taught by a philosopher, so the Platonists were proud in their turn, to see the Christians adopt their principles." Petavius, in his *Theologica Dogmata*, (Lib. I, Cap. 3, de Trinitate,) gives a full account of the Platonic notions concerning the Trinity, and states, "in what manner this doctrine was conceived of by some of the ancients, and how the fiction of Plato concerning the Trinity was gradually introduced into Christianity, by those of the Platonists who had become converts to our religion, or by others, who had been in any way indoctrinated in the Platonic philosophy."

That the doctrine of a Trinity was embraced in the philosophy taught by Plato and Philo cannot be doubted; and it is also evident, that the early Christian fathers, when they became converts to Christianity, adopted it, or amalgamated it into the Christian system. Authorities for this are very numerous; but it is not necessary (and it would take too much space) to insert them in this work. If any one wishes to see a full view of this subject, he may have recourse to the "Intellectual System" of the very learned Orthodox Cudworth, where he can find, I think, more information concerning the origin of the Trinity, than in any other work. From this origin we will take a brief view of the progress of the doctrine.



It is not pretended, that the Pagan or Platonic trinity was altogether like the modern doctrine; but only that it was the origin, the seed that produced it. Though the earliest fathers seemed to agree fully with the Platonists, yet others, with ecclesiastical councils, soon began to make alterations in the doctrine; (I will not say improvements, for I think every alteration they made was a change from bad to worse.) The Platonic philosophy established a trinity of three gods; a first god, a second god, and a third god; not, however, all equal; for they considered the second and third much inferior to the first, or as only attributes of the first, as his wisdom, or power, &c. And we find nothing about the numerical union of the three, or of three equal persons in Deity, or of trinity in unity. But after a while they personified the Platonic Logos, or wisdom of God, and called it the Son; but they still made him subordinate to the Father. And the Nicene council attempted to go still further, and declared the Son to be consubstantial, of the same substance, with the Father, not that he *was the* same substance, that is, the supreme God; but that he was *of* him, and therefore could not be the same; for a person, who is of, or from, another, cannot be that other. Cain was of, or from, Adam, but he was not Adam. Eve was of, or from, the substance of Adam; but she was not Adam. And they were not numerically one person or being. There was nothing but a specific or generic sameness between them; there subsisted a union, only in love, agreement, design and interest. But this council did nothing towards deifying, or even personifying, the Holy Spirit. But afterwards, in A. D. 381, the Emperor Theodosius called another council to remedy this defect, and to anathematize Macedonius, "who had denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit." This council decreed, that the "Holy Ghost is the Lord and Giver of Life, proceeding from the Father, and with the Father and Son to be worshipped and glorified." This council did not expressly make the Holy Spirit equal with the Father, but implicitly the contrary; because they say, it "proceeded from the Father," therefore could not be equal with him. Indeed, the perfect equality both of the Holy Spirit and of the Son with the Father was not expressly declared, or established by any ecclesiastical council, for some centuries afterwards. But when it came to be

generally received, when it was determined, that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, each of them, was God, was Lord, was almighty, was supreme, self-existent, and independent, it seemed to be a matter of necessity, that there must be three equal, supreme Gods; the Bible, and all nature to the contrary notwithstanding! To remedy this difficulty, the Trinity was so amended, as to make it a trinity of persons numerically the same, or having all one and the same singular existent being. And this was the last, finishing, important stroke to the trinitarian fabrication. The learned Cudworth, when considering the different kinds of trinitarian doctrines, observes, "that not a few of those ancient fathers, who were therefore reputed Orthodox, because they zealously opposed Arianism, namely, Gregory, Nyssen, Cyril of Alexandria, and others, entertained the opinion, that the three persons in the Trinity were three distinct individuals, like three individual men, Thomas, Peter, and John;" and remarks, that "some would think, that the ancient and genuine Platonic trinity, taken with all its faults, is to be preferred before this Trinity." But he says, "as this Trinity came afterwards to be decried for tritheistic, so in the room thereof, there rose up that other trinity of persons numerically the same, or having all one and the same singular existent essence; a doctrine which seemeth not to have been owned by any public authority in the Christian church, save that of the Lateran council only." This council was convened under Pope Innocent, the Third, A. D. 1215, in the depth of the dark ages; (it is not fully acknowledged as œcumenical,) it was composed principally of monks and scholastic enthusiasts. It was this council, that put the finishing touch to the Trinitarian creed. It was this council, that established the not more absurd doctrine of transubstantiation. It was this council, which directed a vindictive persecution of heretics, ordering them to be sought out and exterminated. It was this council, that promoted the tribunals of the inquisition. And will Christians, in this enlightened age, for their guide in faith and praactice, take the decrees of such a council, in preference to the plain, pure doctrines of the Son of God? Since the thirteenth century, I believe, there has been no essential alterations in the scheme. Whatever change there has been, has been in unmeaning words—not at all for the better.

It now remains only to account for the origin, progress, and continuance of the doctrine to this day, without the necessity of acknowledging its truth. And this is an easy matter. It must be acknowledged, that, while the Apostles had the administration of the affairs of the church, there was nothing that appeared at all like the present Trinitarian doctrine. But when they had left the world, after having converted to their faith many learned doctors, and Platonic philosophers, who possessed almost all the learning and talent of the age, it was natural, and a matter of course, that the control, direction, and all the affairs of the church, should (as they did) go into their hands. And although they were sincere converts to Christianity, yet as they were but men, (having prepossessions like other men,) no less could have been expected of them, than that they should amalgamate the doctrines of their early-taught philosophy into their late adopted religion; which we find they did. And so by them, and their successors, the progress of the doctrine was effected; while the common and unlearned Christians were generally opposed to it; and I believe ever have been so, (when left to act freely,) from that time to the present. But what could they do? Not one in ten of them, in that age, could read or write at all. And those who could read had not the means for it; there were then no books printed; and manuscripts and copies were so few, and costly, that the poor and common Christians could not obtain them. What could have been expected, but that they would be controlled, directed, and carried along, as they were, in the strong current caused by the Platonizing fathers, who had become their teachers? This current was made powerful by a multitude of Platonizing fathers, and by the addition of local ecclesiastical councils, so as to immerge all other streams of faith; and in the fourth century, it was by a general council at Nice, with the great Emperor Constantine at its head, (the civil and ecclesiastical powers being then first united,) made as absolutely irresistible, as the current of the Mississippi, or the billows of the ocean. If any one attempted to resist the decrees, what was his fate? He must be excommunicated, anathematized, imprisoned, or banished, or put to death; nay more, he must be damned eternally! Who would not *profess* to believe *anything*, to free himself from these evils, to save himself from

temporal and eternal death? And what merit would there be in such a forced faith? This system of persecution for opinion's sake was carried on for centuries, even through all the dark ages. True, there were some little breathings of liberty and hope, when there happened to be a favorable change of emperors; but these were short and few. And, since great light has dawned upon the world, even since the Reformation, (as it is called,) though the arm of civil power has been generally withheld, yet the minds of Christians to this day have been directly, or indirectly, almost irresistably led and compelled to receive this unscriptural doctrine, by the solemn decrees of ecclesiastical councils, by the gloomy dogmas of priestcraft, and the insinuating influence of early education. Such faith, thus produced, thus sustained, can be no evidence of the truth of its doctrines, whatever length of time may have groaned under them. Then let us rely on the Bible only. Let us go for direction, and for our faith, to Him who "hath the words of eternal life."

But it may be useful, more particularly, to account for the prevalence and continuance of this doctrine in modern times, and especially in this enlightened age. This doctrine was entailed upon modern times by the enthusiasm of monks, by the force of ecclesiastical creeds and decrees, and by the power of civil authority, by persecuting, by inflicting temporal punishment, and threatening with future condemnation, all who would not receive the Orthodox faith. But at present the same kind of persecutions and corporal punishments are not used. Trinitarians now do not imprison the body, but only fetter and chain the mind; they do not hold men to their faith, by threatening them with temporal evils, but by insuring to them eternal destruction, if they depart from the faith. Their system is to begin with children; to teach them mystical catechisms, and strange doctrines, which minds of their age, and of no age, can understand. They instruct them parrot-like, in their peculiar doctrines and creeds, so that by the habit of constant repetition (and habit is second nature) they become fixed and tolerable, and are thought to be as true as the Bible.\* And when they

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\* I can remember the time when I thought the Westminister Assembly's Catechism, and the preaching of our minister, were as true and as much to

arrive at more mature age, they are furnished with a multitude of books, pamphlets, and tracts, all of the orthodox stamp; they are prevented, if possible, from reading any of a different character. In this way they are trained up when young, in the way their instructors *wish them* to go, expecting that when they are old they will not depart therefrom; for

“**T**is education forms the common mind,  
Just as the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.”

And when they have advanced to manhood, their pious Orthodox teachers still treat them as children; they will not allow them to hear any other doctrine preached; they will not suffer any clergymen who hold a different faith to preach in their pulpits; for, by their practice, they consider them heretics or infidels, and disbelievers of the Bible; they seem not to possess much of that virtue, without which, Paul said, he “should become as sounding brass, or a tinkling symbol;” without which, said he, “though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, I am nothing.” Furthermore, these well meaning preachers labor hard to persuade their hearers, that if they do not fully believe the Trinitarian doctrine, they are heretics, they are infidels, they are unbelievers of the word of God, and that they cannot be saved; they “must perish everlastingly.” They may sincerely worship the Father almighty, the only true God; have full faith in his Son, sent by the Father to be their only Mediator and Saviour; be filled with love to God, and gratitude towards the Saviour; and be ever so thankful for the blessed influence of the Holy Spirit; yet, if they believe not the whole of a doctrine, which cannot be found in the Bible, they “must undoubtedly perish everlastingly!” And even in this world, if they are members of their church, they must be cast out, and treated as an anathema

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be regarded as the Bible; for I was taught my catechism by my mother, who was a pious woman; and I knew she loved me most affectionately, and would not teach me any thing that was not true, and for my good. She had full confidence in her minister; and I had full confidence in my mother; and she always told me, when I was going to church, to “mind what the minister says,” and so I did; but a great part of it I understood no more than if it had been Dutch.

maranatha. \* And if there should be present any professing Christian, from other churches, who cannot swallow all their creed, they are sometimes not allowed to sit down with them at the table of the Lord, to commemorate the dying love of their Saviour; they are virtually told, "Stand by," we are "more holy than" you! † Is this their construction of the Scriptural doctrine of esteeming others better than ourselves? And would it not be well for them to consider that, to those persons to whom they say, "Stand

\* A notable case recently occurred in the State of New Jersey. Dr. Stevens J. Lewis, a member of the Presbyterian Church of Morristown, conscientiously changed his faith concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, and honestly confessed it to the church; and requested a regular dismission, so that he might join a Unitarian church in New York. But he was told, that he could not be dismissed from the church, on account of his change of religious sentiments, without submitting to a course of discipline with which the Dr. was unwilling to comply, as he held himself accountable to God only, for the correctness of his faith. He was therefore summoned to appear before the church, to answer to the charges of "1st. Denying the personality of the Holy Ghost, &c. 2d. Denying and deriding the doctrine of the Trinity, as set forth in our confession of faith, &c. 3d. Attempting to draw away the youth and others from the doctrine of our church, by publishing extensively your views and feelings in opposition to the same."

Upon these charges the church proceeded to try and condemn him as follows.

"It was decided by a unanimous vote, taken upon each charge separately, that the charges had been all sustained; wherefore,

"Resolved, unanimously, that Dr. Stevens J. Lewis be, and he hereby is excommunicated from this church.

"Resolved, that this sentence of excommunication be published from the desk on the day of the next preparatory lecture. The above is a copy of the minute of the doings of the session, on the 27th of Nov. last.

"O. L. KIRTLAND."

"Dec. 1st. 1837."

A particular narrative of this case may be seen in a pamphlet, entitled, "The Narrative showing the manner in which they do things in the Presbyterian Church, in the nineteenth century;" printed at Morristown, N. J. Such proceedings have a powerful effect to prevent pious, peaceable Christians from making any objections to whatever doctrines the church may establish.

† It is a well known fact, that some bishops of the Church of England, some Presbyterian elders, and other clergymen, have, and I believe now do, debar from their communion table, all anti-trinitarian, or unitarian professors of religion, though regular members of other Christian churches. But I expect, and rejoice that this unchristian, uncharitable practice is approaching towards an end. In the New England States it is almost extinct.

by," Christ may say, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you!" Are not all these facts and circumstances sufficient to account for the prevalence and continuance of this doctrine, without the necessity of receiving it for truth? Will any one be so weak as to say it must be true, because it has been erroneously believed so long? Could it be expected, that the generality of Christians, if they were convinced, would at once, renounce and give up their early imbibed notions, all the creeds and doctrines they had been taught from their infancy, when they are told and assured, if they do, they will be persecuted through life, and damned eternally? "All that a man hath, will he give for his life." Surely, then, would a man *profess* to believe *anything*, to save himself from great temporal evils, and from everlasting misery. It cannot be necessary to add more upon this point. I will mention but one more circumstance, which has great weight. It is well known that all bishops, priests, and other teachers in the Episcopal churches subscribe to the thirty-nine articles, in which is contained the Trinitarian doctrine; and all other Trinitarian teachers make public profession of their faith in that doctrine; and generally the members of their churches are required to make the same profession. Now every one knows how natural it is (it is almost second nature) for a man to stick to a faith to which he has pledged himself. If he does not, he is apt to be considered a weak man, or a wicked one. So he is insensibly carried along, as it were by a current, an overwhelming current of popular opinion. I cannot, therefore, conceive, that the prevalence or continuance of this doctrine is any evidence of its truth. Let us therefore lay it aside, and stick to the Bible, the only sure guide for faith and practice.

## CHAPTER XX.

### CONCLUSION. MISCELLANEOUS MATTER.

I HAVE now taken a brief view (not so full as I would have done, if I had not feared that I should be too prolix, tedious, and uninteresting) of all the most important passages of Scripture, relating to the doctrine of the Trinity, together with the dictates of reason (peculiar gifts of God to men) according therewith. I have also considered most of the Trinitarian creeds, catechisms, confessions, liturgies, and ecclesiastical decrees of the Orthodox fathers, and other pious, great, and learned divines. And I have noticed the arguments and reasoning of both ancient and modern Trinitarians; and from the whole I feel obliged to conclude, that the doctrine of the Trinity is not proved, is not supported, is not made out, by the Bible, the whole Bible, nor by any passage thereof, if taken in connexion with its context; but that on the contrary, is fully, either expressly, or by necessary inference disproved, or overthrown; and that all the creeds, decrees, arguments, and reasoning of Trinitarians, if thoroughly examined, are fatal to the truth of the doctrine, or destroy some of its essential foundations. And I will ask all candid, intelligent Christians, who will be at the trouble of examining the subject fully, who hold the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, for their creed, if laying aside all prepossessions, and influences of creeds and decrees, they can possibly, conscientiously, come to a different conclusion.

Now, some Trinitarians may say to me, You seem to *disbelieve* much which we believe; what do *you* believe? Do you believe anything? Have you any faith at all? I



am willing to state my belief fully and clearly, in words that have no ambiguity or uncertainty; and also to give the reasons for the faith that is in me. I complain of Trinitarians, that they seem to select ambiguous words, words of doubtful, various, or uncertain meaning, words of Platonic philosophy, of the Gnostic schools, or of modern invention, and not words of the Bible, so much as they ought to do. I know, that Trinitarians often say, that their opponents "do not believe enough." I believe, in general terms, all that is written in the Holy Scriptures. Is not that enough? Where can I go for more? Must I go to creeds, catechisms, or decrees of uninspired men, ancient or modern? No; I will not go to them; they are not the book of God; they are human inventions. Again; I believe all that the Prophets, the Apostles, and the Son of God have directed that I should believe. Is not this enough? To whom can I go for further or better directions? But it may be necessary to particularize. In the first place, then, I believe in one only God, the Father almighty, the Maker, Creator, Director, and Preserver of all things. And my reason for this faith is, that the Bible, and all nature, and reason clearly teach and direct me thus to believe.

In the second place, I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, the Father. This I believe of Christ, because the Almighty himself proclaimed the fact from heaven; "this is my beloved Son;"—Christ, while on earth, asserted it, and his Apostles all confirmed and taught it. I believe, that Christ was the constituted Mediator between God and men, to reconcile men to God, and not God to men; that the Son was appointed by the Father to be the Saviour of sinners, and that he freely and willingly accepted the appointment; that it was love only towards men, amazing love, that induced the Father to plan, and the Son willingly to execute, the great and glorious work of salvation, whereby Christ was to become incarnate, to teach and instruct men on earth, to set a perfect example of a pure and holy life, to work miracles, to suffer, and to seal his mission with his own blood, and to be raised to heaven, and seated at the right hand of the Father. All this I believe concerning the Son, because the Scriptures so clearly teach. But I do not, I cannot believe, that the Son of God is the supreme God; because the Bible does not so

direct me, and because I should thereby renounce my first article of faith in the one only God, the Father, and should nullify the immutable laws of God, by making the Son his own Father! Neither can I believe, that the Son was a mere man, or no more than a man; for I believe that he was more and better than men or angels, even "as much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." The Bible is my authority for this faith. I further believe, that Christ existed spiritually before men or angels; that he was "the first born of every creature." But I do not consider, that those, who sincerely disbelieve in the pre-existence of the Son, are necessarily guilty of a damnable heresy, or any heresy at all; but that they are only in an error; an error that may be excusable, because the Bible is not perfectly clear upon this point; though I consider, that the whole weight of the testimony is decidedly and irresistibly in favor of his pre-existence. But this appears to me to be a matter, as among anti-trinitarians, not of vital importance. It is more a question of time than of substance. Suppose one Christian believes, that Christ has existed only eighteen hundred and forty years, and another believes he has existed eighteen million years: one or the other must be in an error as to time; but suppose they both have exactly the same belief as to his merits, his mission, and his whole character in every respect, could the difference of opinion as to time *only*, be of any consequence? Let me state an easy case for illustration. I believe that Washington was born in A. D. 1732; my neighbor contends that he was not born till 1740. But as to his being a great and good man, and under God the political saviour of his country, and as to his whole true character, my neighbor and I are perfectly agreed. Now, must I condemn my good neighbor as a traitor to his country, and a reviler of Washington, because he is in an error as to the time of his birth, a matter of no consequence at all, to the merits of the case? So, if a professed Christian has a correct and full faith concerning all the merits, and the whole perfect character of Christ, the only begotten son of God, the Father, though he may be in an error, as to the time when he was begotten, or first caused to exist, I could not pronounce him a heretic to be condemned; the most I could say would be, that he is a brother,

who is in an error, on an immaterial point, or in a matter that is not clearly revealed ; therefore Christian charity will not anathematize him, or withhold from him any brotherly love and communion.

It therefore follows, of course, according to my views, that I cannot believe in the Trinitarian double nature of Christ. It appears to me, that the hypothesis, that the supreme, unchangable God became man, "emptied himself" (as they say) into a human body, and there veiled all his infinite, unbounded glories, for more than thirty yerrs ; that he became personally and visibly an instructor and teacher to his disciples and the multitude : that he suffered and died on the cross, rose again, and reascended to heaven ! This hypothesis, I say, appears to be a thing more absurd, ridiculous and impossible, than it would be to suppose that, two thousand years ago, the whole boundless ocean emptied itself into, and became a drop of water, which had fallen on the rock of Gibraltar, and there remained, in that drop, (still being the perfect ocean,) for more than thirty years, and then resumed its former station !—or to suppose that the sun, the great orb of light and heat, and the controller of the planets, some hundred years since, diffused itself wholly into, and became a fire-fly on earth, leaving the planets without an enlightener, animator, and controller, for thirty years, and then returned to its centre, and reassumed its established office ; and further, to suppose, that this drop of water is the whole ocean, or equal to it, and distinct from it ; and that this fire-fly is the very sun, the centre of our system, or equal with it in every respect. And there is as much evidence in the natural world to prove these suppositions respecting the ocean and the sun, as there is in the Bible to prove the Trinitarian hypothesis of two natures (of God and man) in Christ. The unity of the Son is as clearly set forth in the Bible, as the unity of the Father ; we find no kind of plurality respecting either of them. "To us there is but one God, the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father."

In the third place, I believe in the Holy Spirit, as the power, influence, or gift of God, made effectual for the conviction, conversion, and sanctification of sinners, and for the consolation and joy of the righteous ; I do not, I cannot believe, that the Spirit of God is by itself independently God,

or a person of Deity equal with the Fathe, or any person at all; because the scriptures do not so instruct me, And in this view I consider the holy spirit of vital importance in the Christian's faith.

And I further believe, that repentance and reformation are as necessary to salvation, as faith in God and in his Son and spirit. And I believe with Paul, that "faith without works is dead." And I also believe, that good works, without love to God, and faith in his Son and spirit avail nothing. In fine, without further particularizing, I believe all the doctrines, which Christ or his Apostles taught. Will Trinitarians tell me I "do not believe enough?" If they do, I will ask them, by what authority they tell me so, and who gave them such authority?

I will now respectfully ask Trinitarians, the learned Trinitarians in particular, What think ye of my creed? Is it not consistent with the Bible? Does it violate any of God's laws of nature and reason? Does it go to any principles of ancient or modern philosophy, to any merely human invention for support? Does it claim any foundation but the word of God? I will further ask, how will you treat this little book, this weak production, as you may call it, for I agree, that it would be weak indeed, if it were not supported by the Bible and by the dictates of reason. Will you determine without examination, that no theological good can come out of a layman, and that you must condemn it unread? I have no objection to this course, if you will but allow your flock, those under your instruction and guidance, to read, examine, and decide for themselves freely, without having their minds forestalled, or filled with prejudices; for I have too often found, that able anti-trinitarian works have been condemned without a reading, or without fair and full consideration; and that common Christians have been urged not to read them, because they were heterodox or dangerous. But truth can never be in danger from full investigation. It will stand against all the open assaults of its adversaries, and grow brighter from opposition. Counterfeits only will not bear investigation. Or will you condescend, or undertake, to review this small work, to point out its errors, or show its heresy? This I should like; for I wish to be convinced, if I am in an error; or to have an opportunity to reply to all arguments

that can be offered ; for I am so fully persuaded, upon thirty years' particular examination of the Scriptures, that the Trinitarian doctrine cannot be supported by the Bible, that I now challenge the whole Christian world, bishops, doctors, professors, and all the learned, to produce a single passage from the Bible, *which*, taken with its context, will prove and support the doctrine ; nay more, which will not clearly disprove and overthrow it ; or to offer one argument which will not be fatal to some essential pillar of the system. For I conceive, that there is no revealed evidence of its truth, and that there can be none ; for the Almighty himself cannot reveal an impossibility. I make not this challenge, for the purpose of exciting disputation or division, but to produce union and harmony. In almost all controversies, both parties are, in some respects, in error. When there are extremes, generally, *in medio est veritas*, truth lies between them. The great point of division on this subject is the nature and character of the Son of God. If Christians could be agreed as to this point, I think all other differences would soon cease. And why can they not agree ? A jury of twelve men can generally agree unanimously upon most questions before them. And certainly there never was a case tried by a jury, where the evidence was so perfect and clear, as it is in the Bible respecting the nature and character of the Son of God. Let Christians try to be agreed, instead of trying to disagree as much as possible, as they have done for centuries. Let them try to be agreed, by a candid and impartial search after truth, not as it may be in creeds, but "as it is in Jesus." Let those, who believe that Christ is the supreme God, consider, that it is possible that they may be in an error ; and let them examine the Bible fully and candidly as to this point. And let those, who hold that Christ was only a man, see to it, that they are not in the wrong ; let them study the Scriptures, and convince themselves of their error ; let them rise, greatly rise, in their views of the nature and character of the Son of God. Let Humanitarians and Deitarians meet each other meet, meet, not contrary to truth, but where the truth, lies where the Bible directs ; let them give the Son of God his true Bible-station, somewhere between angels and his Almighty Father ; let them give him that character, that station, which the Father gave him

when he sent his spirit upon him, and proclaimed in a mighty voice from heaven, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased;" and then they will honor the Son, and the Father also. And then, I think, all other disagreements would be done away, through love and brotherly communion; and all the churches on earth might be united in one church of Christ below, be, as he prayed, all one in Christ! Transporting thought! O, that God would speak, and say, Let it be accomplished; and it would be so.

No one can be more desirous to promote charity, union, harmony, and brotherly love among Christians of all sects, than I am. I adhere to no sect or doctrine but what is supported by the Bible. I am not an advocate for any denomination that does not harmonize with the Gospel of Christ. I do not claim the name of any sect—I only wish to be evangelical—to bear the Christian name, only, which is above every name, and to maintain all that Christ taught, all that the evangelists have recorded, and nothing less, nothing more, nothing contrary thereto. I therefore request, that it may be ever remembered, that if I have written anything that may seem harsh, severe, or satirical, it is not intended to be applied to the person or character of any professing Christian or theological writer whatever; but only to the erroneous, inconsistent, unscriptural productions of uninspired men. I feel as much love for Trinitarian Christians, as for any other; because I believe they are sincere, that their hearts are right, though their heads may be wrong. Nor have I intended to say anything, in the least irreverently, to be applied to our heavenly Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit, or the Holy Scriptures; but whatever hypothesis, doctrines, or creeds I have found directly and clearly inconsistent therewith, I may have condemned in severe or satirical terms, as every one ought to do. While we love and admire the doctrines which Christ taught, we may treat with contempt, and sarcasm, the wickedly fascinating notions promulgated by Mahomet. While we should ever, in the highest strains, praise and adore the one, only true God, we may laugh at Jupiter and his multitude of inferior deities. The holy prophet severely ridiculed the gods of the false prophets.

Now, although I conceive that I have fully shown, that

the doctrine of the Trinity (as held at the present day) is not, and cannot be, proved or supported by the Bible, or by nature and reason, yet there is another view, in which I wish to consider it for a moment.

To me it appears that the Trinitarian system (with the doctrines usually accompanying it) naturally and necessarily carries with it a strong tendency and adaptedness, to distract and destroy that supreme and holy worship of the only true God, the Father almighty, which is due to Him alone; as it teaches, that two other persons, or beings, or distinctions, or somewhats should be worshipped equally with him; to make the Father almighty but a third of almighty God, declaring that the Son is almighty, and that the Holy Spirit is also almighty; and so that the Father is deprived of two thirds of his power, and the minds of Christians are bewildered, when they essay to worship him; to discourage worship and prayer to God, teaching *literally*, that the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord, and that they cannot do anything that is acceptable to him; that it seems to make the all-perfect God an unjust, unmerciful Being, who requires of his creatures what he has not given them power to perform; destroys the free agency of men, and offers no inducement to them to be virtuous and holy, to "cease to do evil and learn to do well;" that it is not calculated to promote charity, which Paul taught was greater than faith and hope; for their creed expressly says that those "who do not believe it wholly, must perish everlastingly;" therefore they have no charity for those of a different faith. And what did Paul say *he* should be without charity? Did not he direct Christians to put *on* charity, instead of putting it *off*, according to the Trinitarian doctrine?

I further conceive, that this system has a strong tendency to check and discourage the progress and increase of Christianity. Peter, we are told, on the day of Pentecost, by preaching the plain, pure, simple doctrines of Christ, the Son of God, who was "approved of God by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him," gained or converted three thousand souls. But, if he had preached as Trinitarians now preach, if he had told the multitude, that Christ, whom they "by wicked hands had crucified," was the supreme God, I do not believe he would have made even

ten proselytes, if he had one ; for the people would all have exclaimed, he is a madman or a fool. The apostles had most wonderful success in making converts to the Gospel of Christ ; but they effected it by preaching him, as really the Son of God, the appointed Mediator, and as having been really crucified. They never preached any doctrine like trinity in unity. And when, sometime after the Apostles, this strange doctrine began to make progress, opposition to Christianity increased. And I verily believe, that the monstrous imposture of Mahomet would never have existed, had it not been caused by Trinitarianism, and the gross superstition and austerity of the monks. And the same causes, in my opinion, have prevented millions from embracing Christianity. And I fear that similar effects will continue to be produced, until the cause is removed. The fact is, the religion of Christ is rejected, on account of the misrepresentations of it. If it were always represented in its purity, simplicity, mildness, and in all its loveliness, it would be received universally. Men would see, that it was as necessary for their souls, as food for their bodies. I do, therefore, consider this subject of vast importance. It is now as necessary to establish and maintain the true doctrines of the Gospel, as it was in Copernicus' day to establish the true planetary system : yea infinitely more so. It is most important that all Christians, all intelligent human beings should come to the rescue of the Gospel, that they should free it from all creeds, catechisms, confessions, decrees, and institutions of human invention, that they should place no reliance upon them ; but form their faith and doctrines, and govern their lives by the holy Scriptures *only*. Let them not give up the *Bible*. It is a safe, a glorious ship, for the transportation of immortals through the short, tempestuous voyage of life, into the peaceful haven of everlasting felicity !



## APPENDIX.

The following short forms of prayer, and the few hymns are intended to be used in social religious worship, in places where there is not regular preaching of the Gospel. The Prayers are taken from the forms given by the Rev. Messrs. Brooks and Furness, and "the Book of Common Prayer." The hymns are from various authors.

### INTRODUCTORY PRAYER.

Our Father who art in heaven, we thank thee for continuing our lives and health to another Sabbath. We would now enter thy gates with thanksgiving and thy courts with praise. In the name of our great Mediator we would worship thee in spirit and in truth. May we celebrate thy perfections with reverence and joy, acknowledge thy mercies with gratitude and love, confess our sins with humility and penitence, offer our petitions with piety and fervor, and intercede for our brethren with sympathy and affection; and by the means of religion, and the dispensations of thy Providence, may we be fitted for the higher services and nobler enjoyments of thy heavenly temple. Hear us merciful Parent, as the Disciples of Jesus Christ, through whom to thee be glory forever. Amen.

[Or the following.]

O thou who art present in all worlds and in all hearts! As the disciples of thy Son, in the spirit and faith of his Gospel we seek thy blessing upon this hallowed morning. Inspire us with the spirit of Devotion, that shall sanctify the place and make it the house of God and the gate of heaven. Thou seekest spiritual worshippers, and where such are gathered together, be they many or few, there dost thou dispense thy richest blessings. Help us to meditate

and listen and pray, with lowly and fervent minds, to confess and forsake our sins, and to dedicate our whole being to Thee. By these religious services, begun, continued and ended in thy fear and love, may we be aided to do thy will in life, and prepared for the solemn hour of death, and for entrance into that world, which is eternal, invisible, and full of thy glory. We ask thy blessing, trusting in thy mercy, and ascribing to Thee all might,, dominion and praise forever and ever. Amen.

[Read a portion of Scripture—and then sing one of the following hymns or some other.]

#### PRAYER.

Great art Thou, O God, and unutterable is thy glory. The Universe with all it contains is as but an atom before Thee.

With what joy should our hearts overflow when we consider in how many ways thou art calling us to acquaint ourselves with Thee, to regard thee as our Friend and Father, without whose will not a hair of our heads shall perish, and whose hand is forever extended to bless, We hear the voice of thy love sounding from all thy works. We read the promise of thy care, in the adjustment of all things around and above, to the growth of our minds and the peace of our hearts. In our own bosoms there is an ever present and sound witness of God. We look back upon the history of the past, and everywhere we behold the proofs of thy parental Providence. Thou hast spoken unto the fathers of our race, by the voices of prophets and apostles. And in the riches of thy wisdom and love, One hath appeared, rising upon the world like the sun and filling all things with the light of the knowledge of God. Believing in him, receiving his words as the words of eternal truth, we come with the confidence of children to Thee, the Invisible. Let an influence from on high sanctify our thoughts, and may the power of the everlasting God work mightily within us to enlarge our understandings and enrich our souls. Take us, O our Heavenly Father, under thy holy guidance, and give us the grace of unreserved submission. Make us gentle and patient, and diligent and heavenly minded, and clothe us with profound humility. And now may thy blessing descend and rest upon thy servants here

assembled. Be thou the shield of the young and the staff of the aged. Bless our families and friends. We pray for all men ; for the needy, that they may have that treasure, which is above all price ; for the prosperous, that as they gain honor among men, they may keep themselves humble before God ; for the erring, that they may be reclaimed ; and for all orders of men, that they may possess a wise and understanding spirit, and live in peace and love.

Accept these our services ; ascending from sincere hearts may they bring down upon us thy blessing, and may we manifest their fruits in righteous and holy lives. These things we ask as the disciples of thy Son, for whose mission of mercy praised be thy name forever, and through whom to Thee be rendered praises without end. Amen.

[Sing a hymn. Then read a sermon or some good discourse, or one or two chapters from this book, or some other religious book.]

#### CONCLUDING PRAYER.

O Thou who hearest prayer, again we approach thy sacred presence in the offices of devotion. By thy Providence we have been led to the knowledge and worship of Thee, the only true God, and thou hast appointed the public ordinances of religion for our improvement in piety and virtue ; we give Thee thanks for the privileges we have enjoyed at this time ; and we pray that the words that we have heard may be grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruit of good living to the honor of thy holy name. Forgive what thou hast seen amiss in us, during our present waiting upon Thee. Above all we pray that we may not rest in the forms of religion only. May we never mistake the excitement of our passions, for the renewing of thy spirit. May we never judge of our piety by occasional impulses, but by our constant temper and prevailing habits, May our hearts be right with Thee, and our lives such as becomes the Gospel. Hear us O God, and answer us in mercy through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

[Or the following.]

And now may the God of all grace give power to the word of instruction to which we have at this time listened. May it bring forth immortal fruit. Grant heavenly Father

that we may be wiser and better for this service, more disposed to take serious views of this life, and direct our aims to a higher state. Increase our faith and hope and charity, and may our future conduct, impressed by the truths with which we here commune, bear witness how good a thing it is to worship the Lord our God. Serving Thee day and night henceforth and forever, may we through thine everlasting mercy, meet in that temple not made with hands. And to Thee will we render praise and glory unceasing. Amen.

[Or the following.]

Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants do give Thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us, and to all men. We bless Thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for thine inestimable love, in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And we beseech Thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may show forth thy praise, not only with our lips but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplications unto Thee; and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt grant their request; fulfil now O, Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting.

[Instead of these forms, extemporaneous prayers may be made, if any person present is so disposed to lead in the devotion.]

[Sing Hymn of Dismission.]

#### BENEDICTIONS.

Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and from Jesus Christ our Lord, be with us all evermore. Amen.

[Or the following.]

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of

God, and the communion of his Holy Spirit be with us all forever. Amen.

[Either of the following hymns, or others, may be sung, or read, if there are no singers present.]

1. L. M.

1. From all that dwell below the skies  
Let the Creator's praise arise;  
Let the Redeemer's name be sung,  
Through every land, by every tongue.

2. Eternal are thy mercies Lord;  
Eternal truth attends thy word;  
Thy praise shall sound from shore to shore,  
Till suns shall rise and set no more!

2. L. M.

1. Eternal God, Almighty cause  
Of earth, and seas, and worlds unknown,  
All things are subject to thy laws;  
All things depend on Thee alone.

2. In Thee O Lord, our hopes shall rest,  
Fountain of peace, and joy, and love,  
Thy favor only makes us blest;  
Without Thee all would nothing prove.

3. Worship to Thee alone belongs;  
Worship to Thee alone we give;  
Thine be our hearts, and thine our songs,  
And to Thy glory we would live.

3. S. M.

1. O bless the Lord my soul,  
Let all within me join,  
To aid my tongue, to bless His name,  
Whose favors are divine.

2. O bless the Lord my soul;  
Nor let his mercies lie  
Forgotten, in unthankfulness,  
And without praises die.

3. 'T is he forgives thy sins,  
 'T is he relieves thy pain,  
 'T is he that heals thy sicknesses,  
 And makes thee young again.

4. He fills the poor with good ;  
 He gives the sufferers rest ;  
 The Lord hath judgments for the proud,  
 And justice for the opprest.

#### 4. C. M.

1. Good is the Lord, the heavenly King,  
 Who makes the earth his care,  
 Visits the pastures every spring,  
 And bids the grass appear.

2. The clouds like rivers raised on high,  
 Pour out, at thy command,  
 Their watery blessings from the sky,  
 To cheer the thirsty land.

3. The softened ridges of the field,  
 Permit the corn to spring ;  
 The valleys rich provision yield,  
 And the poor laborers sing.

4. The little hills on every side,  
 Rejoice at falling showers ;  
 The meadows, dressed in all their pride,  
 Perfume the air with flowers.

5. The barren clods, refreshed with rain,  
 Promise a joyful crop ;  
 The parched grounds look green again,  
 And raise the reaper's hope.

6. The various months thy goodness crown,  
 How bounteous are thy ways ;  
 The bleating flocks spread o'er the downs,  
 And shepherds shout thy praise.

## 5. L. M.

1. For Thee in Zion waiteth praise,  
O God, O thou that hearest prayer ;  
To Thee the suppliant voice we raise ;  
To Thee shall all mankind repair.
2. Thy goodness crowns the circling year,  
The wilderness repeats thy voice ;  
The mountains clad with flocks appear ;  
The hills on every side rejoice.
3. And harvests from the vallies spring ;  
The reaper's sickle they employ ;  
And hark ! how hills and vallies ring  
With universal shouts of joy.

## 6. C. M.

1. Let children hear the mighty deeds  
Which God performed of old,  
Which in our younger years we saw,  
And which our fathers told.
2. He bids us make his glories known,  
His works of power and grace ;  
And we'll convey his wonders down  
Through every rising race.
3. Our lips shall tell them to our sons,  
And they again to theirs,  
That generations yet unborn  
May teach them to their heirs.
4. Thus they shall learn in God alone,  
Their hope securely stands,  
That they may ne'er forget his works,  
But practice his commands.

## 7. S. M.

1. I hear the voice of wo ;  
I hear a brother's sigh !  
Then let my heart with pity flow,  
With tears of love my eye.

2. I hear the thirsty cry !  
The hungry beg for bread !  
Then let my spring its stream supply,  
My hand its bounty shed.

3. The debtor humbly sues,  
Who would but cannot pay ;  
And shall I lenity refuse,  
Who need it every day ?

4. If so, how shall I dare  
Appear before thy face,  
Great God, and how present the prayer  
For thy forgiving grace ?

#### 8. L. M.

1. Another six days' work is done,  
Another Sabbath is begun ;  
Return my soul enjoy thy rest,  
Improve the day that God has blest.

2. O that our thoughts and thanks may rise,  
As grateful incense to the skies,  
And draw from heaven that sweet repose,  
Which none but he who feels it knows !

3. This heavenly calm within the breast  
Is the dear pledge of glorious rest,  
Which for the Church of God remains,  
The end of cares, the end of pains.

4. In holy duties let the day—  
In holy pleasures pass away ;  
How sweet a Sabbath thus to spend,  
In hopes of one that ne'er shall end !

#### 9. C. M.

1. When I can read my title clear  
To mansions in the skies,  
I'll bid farewell to every fear,  
And wipe my weeping eyes.



2. Let cares like a wild deluge come,  
 And storms of sorrow fall,  
 May I but safely reach my home,  
 My God, my heaven, my all.

3. There shall I bathe my weary soul  
 In seas of heavenly rest,  
 And not a wave of trouble roll  
 Across my peaceful breast.

#### 10. C. M.

1. With songs and honors sounding loud,  
 Address the Lord on high,  
 Over the heavens he spreads his clouds,  
 And waters veil the skies.

2. He sends his showers of blessings down  
 To cheer the plains below,  
 He makes the grass the mountains crown,  
 And corn in vallies grow.

3. He gives the grazing ox his meat,  
 He hears the ravens' cry,  
 But man, who tastes his finest wheat,  
 Should raise his honors high.

4. The changing wind the flying cloud  
 Obey his mighty word,  
 With songs and honors sounding loud,  
 Praise ye, the sovereign Lord !

#### 11. L. M.

1. Eternal Source of every joy,  
 Well may our lips thy praise employ,  
 While in thy temple we appear,  
 Whose goodness crowns the circling year.

2. The flowery spring at thy command,  
 Embalms the air, and paints the land ;  
 The summer rays with vigor shine,  
 To raise the corn, and cheer the vine.

3. Thy hand in autumn richly pours  
Through all our coasts redundant stores ;  
And winters, softened by thy care,  
No more a face of horror wear.

4. Seasons and months, and weeks and days,  
Demand successive songs of praise ;  
Still be the cheerful homage paid,  
With opening light and evening shade.

5. O may our more harmonious tongues  
In worlds unknown pursue the songs,  
And in those brighter courts adore,  
Where days and years revolve no more.

12. L. M.

1. Again we've seen the Sabbath day,  
And heard of Jesus and of heaven ;  
We thank thee, Father, and we pray,  
That this day's sins may be forgiven.

2. May all we heard and understood  
Be well remembered through the week,  
And help to make us wise and good,  
More humble, diligent and meek.

13. 8s and 7s M.

1. Lord dismiss us with thy blessing,  
Hope and comfort from above ;  
Let us each, thy peace possessing,  
Triumph in redeeming love.

2. Thanks we give and adoration  
For thy Gospel's joyful sound ;  
May the fruits of thy salvation  
In our hearts and lives abound.

14. L. M.

1. Almighty God of boundless love,  
We seek thy blessing from above ;  
We feel thy goodness, own thy power—  
Thy hand supports us every hour.

Thou formed us for one blest design,  
 To sound thy praise, (in songs divine,)  
 For all thy precious mercies given,  
 And all our hopes of joys in heaven.

3. Great God, inspire our souls with zeal,  
 To know thy laws, and do thy will ;  
 To bless and praise Thee, evermore,  
 While thy forgiveness we implore.

15. C. M.

1. Joy to the world ! the Lord is come ;  
 Let earth receive her King ;  
 Let every heart prepare him room,  
 And heaven and nature sing.

2. Joy to the world ! the Saviour reigns ;  
 Let men their songs employ,  
 While fields and floods, rocks, hills and plains,  
 Repeat the sounding joy.

3. He rules the world with truth and grace,  
 And makes the nations prove  
 The glories of his righteousness,  
 And wonders of his love.

16. 8s and 7s M.

1. Praise to Thee, thou great Creator !  
 Praise to Thee from every tongue ;  
 Join my soul with every creature,  
 Join the universal song.

2. For ten thousand blessings given,  
 For the hopes of future joys,  
 Sound his praise through earth and heaven,  
 Sound Jehovah's praise on high.

17. C. M.

1. Lord thou art good ; all nature shows  
 Its mighty Author kind ;  
 Thy bounty through creation flows,  
 Full, free, and unconfined.

2. The whole, in every part, proclaims  
Thy infinite good will ;  
It shines in stars, and flows in streams,  
And bursts from every hill.
3. We view it o'er the spreading main,  
And heavens, that spread more wide ;  
It drops in gentle showers of rain,  
And rolls in every tide.
4. Long hath it been diffused abroad,  
Through ages past and gone ;  
Nor ever can exhausted be,  
But still keeps flowing on.
5. Through the whole earth it pours supplies,  
Spreads joy through every part ;  
O, may such love attract my eyes,  
And captivate my heart,

## 18. S. M.

1. Come we that love the Lord,  
And let our joys be known ;  
Join in a song of sweet accord,  
And thus surround the throne.
2. There shall we see his face,  
And never, never sin—  
There, from the rivers of his grace,  
Drink endless pleasures in.
3. Yes, and before we rise  
To that immortal state,  
The thoughts of such amazing bliss,  
Should constant joys create.
4. Then let our songs abound,  
And every tear be dry ;  
We're marching through Immanuel's ground,  
To fairer worlds on high !







